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ABSTRACT

This document consists of three parts. Part one is Merrow's review, with political emphasis, of competency-based teacher education (CBTE). This article a) examines the origins of CBTE; b) presents a definition of CBTE; c) outlines some of CBTE's problems; d) looks at CBTE specifically in California, Texas, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New York; and e) describes the search for a "rational center." The article stresses the point that issues concerning CBTE are larger than CBTE's "Mechanistic" or "humanistic" nature. It claims that the major issue is a labor-management one, and that questions about CBTE are no longer educational, but political. Part two includes nine reactions to the article in part one. These reactions are from both proponents and opponents of CBTE; educators at local, state, and national levels; and students who have completed CBTE programs. Part three consists of Merrow's response to the criticisms. A bibliography is included. (PB)

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THE POLITICS OF COMPETENCE: A REVIEW OF COMPETENCY-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION

by John G. G. Merrow II

With Replies From: Clark Barron
Don Davies
W. Robert Houston
Bernard McKenna
Marjorie Powell
Albert Shanker
Sandra Shupe
Bill Smith
Sheldon Stoff

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PREFACE

During a debate on rebuilding the House of Commons after World War II, Winston Churchill observed that "we shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us." This statement comes to mind as I view the "competency-based" concept being applied to the education endeavor--from high school graduation requirements to licenses for teachers. We have shaped a concept and now the concept shapes us.

The extent to which we are being shaped by the "competency-based" concept in the training and licensing of teachers is the topic of this volume. The central statement, "The Politics of Competence: A Review of Competency-Based Teacher Education," provides a review and interpretation of activity nationally. (The importance of this activity can be underscored by the estimate that hundreds of thousands of educator-person years are being consumed by this movement.) This statement is followed by a series of perspectives by people who either helped shape the "competency-based" concept, or who are now responding to the concept's shaping force.

The general purpose of the National Institute of Education in publishing a volume such as this one is to raise the level of public debate on contemporary issues in education. To this end, the format followed is to review and interpret a national activity, followed by perspectives from major interested parties.

Your comments will be welcome and should be addressed to:

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Credit for this volume belongs to the authors who spent many hours preparing the enclosed statements, and to those of you who gave time so generously in the interview material presented by Dr. Merrow.

Garry L. McDaniels

N.I.E. Staff: Charles Wheeler, Mary Dyer

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PART I

THE POLITICS OF TEACHER TRAINING: A REVIEW OF COMPETENCY-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION

A Report to the National Institute of Education

Submitted by:

Dr. John G.G. Merrow, II
Institute for Educational Leadership
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Although there are a number of approaches to judging whether a teacher is competent, none of the methods now in use is particularly reliable or precise. The imprecision is especially unfortunate now, when there is increasing pressure for holding teachers accountable for the results of public schooling. The pressure comes from school boards, state legislatures, parents, some educators, and taxpayers generally.

Help may be on the way. A sizable number of states, teacher training institutions, and education researchers have devised something called competency-based teacher education (CBTE).[1/] If it works, CBTE could mean that future teachers will be told what teaching skills (competencies) they will need to be successful in the classroom, and they will study until they can demonstrate the required competencies. The promise of CBTE, however, takes in more than the teachers of tomorrow. Those now in the classroom could be retrained for competence, say CBTE advocates, and school boards, teachers and their unions, parents, and students will celebrate the renaissance of public education.

But maybe not right away. The proposal involves a good deal of conflict, a very shaky scientific base, and a certain amount of sleight-of-hand. There is agreement, however, on the need for some orderly, fair method of evaluating both teachers and schools.

Let's go back to determining competence. Parents inevitably wonder about the competence of their child's teacher or teachers. Many parents probably end up assuming competence, if only for their own peace of mind. A conclusion of incompetence carries with it a heavier burden than packing the child off to school in the morning. Such a conclusion means parents must get personally involved in transfer requests, or they must search for a nonpublic school--prices many parents are not willing to pay.

Most parents probably base their conclusions about competence on a combination of events, observation, memory, and gossip. First, they can judge their own child's "progress," and they have a good

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1/ Sometimes called performance-based teacher education or PBTE. There are even enthusiasts who refer to it as "reality-based...."

idea whether or not the child likes the school and the teacher. Parents also rely on hearsay from other parents, on memories of their own "good" teachers, on faith in teacher licensing procedures, and on their own fleeting glimpses of the teacher. All in all, it is unscientific and unsatisfactory, and yet parents rest easier once they have decided that their child has a "good" teacher.

School districts are not much more scientific when it comes to hiring teachers. Factors such as student enrollment and money influence decisions. A district asks slightly different questions about competence: Will it get its money's worth when it hires a new teacher? Has it been getting its money's worth from those now employed (and perhaps eligible for tenure)?

Decisions about tenure are supposed to depend on whether or not the individual teacher's performance in the school has been satisfactory, but personalities and economics enter in. Some districts make it a policy to release many of their teachers after the second year. That avoids the tenure decision (usually made after the third year), and it keeps the salary budget low. But a decision about the "competence" of those who become eligible for tenure must be made. The process is not at all scientific, and probably not even standardized. Many have said that the individual teacher's relationships with the principal and the rest of the faculty are major determinants of "satisfactory performance" or "competence." This may or may not be the case now, but it undoubtedly would not be true if school districts had a true measure of the competence for their teachers. The measures do not exists. Nonetheless, nine states now have some sort of "accountability" laws that require teacher evaluation.2/

Hiring procedures vary, of course. But vacancies, recruiting trips, applicant interviews, recommendations, and the applicant's academic record are generally part of the process. Some applicants send videotapes of themselves in "microteaching" situations, an innovation which at least reduces travel costs. However, this

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2/ California, Connecticut, Florida, Kansas, New Jersey, Oregon, South Dakota, Virginia, and Washington.

approach probably doesn't tell the school district any more than a personal interview would.

In summary, there is simply no way for a school district to know in advance which applicants will be competent teachers. The school district chooses one applicant over others (probably lots of others because it is a buyer's market)3/, but there isn't enough information available on the practice. To put it another way, the college or university that just finished training the teacher cannot guarantee that the graduate will be competent teacher.

About 230,000 Teachers a Year

If the teacher training institution cannot guarantee competence, how does it decide that its students have qualified for degrees (and for teaching certificates, since the two generally come together)? On what basis did those institutions graduate about 230,000 teachers in 19744/, if not on competence in teaching?

Teacher colleges rely on credit hours, professional judgment, and time. The student who accumulates the required number of credits (including "practice teaching" under the guidance of a trained teacher) earns a degree and a provisional certificate. The permanent certificate comes later, after a few years of "satisfactory" performance and perhaps a few more courses.

It must be apparent that there is a problem with the definition of competence. Just what is competence in teaching, and what are the identifying marks of a competent teacher? Right now the answer to both questions is "nobody knows."5/

3/ The National Education Association estimated that there are 110,000 openings for the fall of 1974. See also The New York Times, June 16, 1974, p. 16.

4/ The figures were supplied by the American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE).

5/ Which is not to say that no one is working on the answers.

Some readers may declare (indignantly), "I can tell a good teacher when I see one." That response merely restates the problem. Because everybody knows what competence in teaching is, nobody really knows; that is, nobody can safely predict competence.

There is simply no good evidence equating any specific training steps with subsequent teaching behavior and student performance.6/ Let's go backward from the desired student performance, say, higher reading scores. There is no conclusive evidence that one way of teaching is better than another for producing higher test scores. (There is some evidence that one approach works well with some kids, another approach with others.)7/ The link between training methods and actual teaching practices is also weak. Even if one method works there is no guarantee that training teachers in the use of that method would actually cause them to use it in the classroom.8/

In fact, the situation is slightly more comple, because Americans have not come to an agreement about the purposes of schooling.9/ Thus, even if teachers could be trained to do ABCD in the classroom--and even if one could be certain that following those steps makes children learn better--there still is no solid evidence that higher test scores lead to adult success or happiness or wealth

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6/ Recommended research:

1) B. Rosenshine and Furst, N., "Research on Teacher Performance Criteria," in B. O. Smith (ed.), Research in Teacher Education: A Symposium. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1971)
2) B. Rosenshine and Furst, N., "The Use of Direct Observation to Study Teaching," in R.W. Travers (ed.) Second Handbook of Research on Teaching. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1973)
3) M.J. Dunkin and Biddle, B.J., The Study of Teaching (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974)
4) C.S. Jencks et al, Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America. (New York: Basic Books, 1972)

7/ The best evidence is in H. Featherstone, "Cognitive Effects of Pre School Programs on Different Types of Children," Huron Institute, Cambridge, Mass., 1973. See also M.S. Smith and J. Bissel, "Report Analysis: The Impact of Headstart," Harvard Educational Review.

8/ See Rosenshine and Furst; Dunkin and Biddle, op. cit.

9/ Jencks et al., rehearse these arguments.

(which are often assumed to be the goals of schooling). But it is by no means self evident that public schooling has success, etc., as ultimate goals. More likely, public schools exist to maintain the dominant culture and to ease the transition from childhood to young adulthood. That is, the broad cultural goals outweigh individual considerations. There are other arguments, though: schools are a sorting mechanism to decide who gets the better jobs, or; schools are a certifying device to make hereditary privileges look democratic.10/

And the best evidence about teaching competence suggests that the most effective teachers are warm, responsive, clear, organized, and enthusiastic.11/ These are traits that seem easier to recruit for than to teach. And so, despite the fact that everyone favors competence (it would be hard to oppose it), the teacher training institutions cannot guarantee delivery. They rely on credit hours and professional judgment. School districts look to interviews, transcripts, recommendations, and observation, and parents lean heavily on intuition, memory, hearsay, and trust.

The Teachers' Problem

Teachers have a serious problem when it comes to proving their success, even though anyone who has been to public school "knows" a good teacher, and even though some teachers may be generally recognized as better than others. Still, proof that any teacher or teaching technique make a difference is hard to come by. Explaining what causes gains in student test scores is the problem.

10/ See Michael B. Katz, Class Bureaucracy and School (Praeger, New York, 1971); Joel H. Spring, Education and the Rise of the Corporate State (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972); Colin H. Greer, The Great School Legend (New York: Basic Books, 1973); and Richard J. Hernstein, "IQ", The Atlantic Monthly, September, 1972, pp. 43-64.

11/ Rosenshine and Furst: Durkin and Biddle, op. cit.

The gains may be caused by any number of factors: age, native ability, home environment, test conditions, measurement error, and the teacher's teaching. Many teachers hope that teaching makes a difference--that a "good" teacher accounts for 50 percent of the increased knowledge--but that is not likely to be true. Robert Soar of the University of Florida says that his own hunch is that researchers are talking about between 10 and 15 percent, and that the rest of the difference between pre-test and post-test scores is explained by student interest, ability, parental income and training, etc.12/ If Soar is right, it means that teachers simply are not that important to many students. Person Z, in other words, will learn pretty much the same amount and at about the same rate no matter who does the teaching.

All this is counter-intuitive, because public school graduates just know that teachers make a difference. Some people are willing to take the next slippery step: if teachers are only responsible for a little learning (10-15 percent), why should 75 percent of the educational budget be for salaries? Why not instead find out which teachers can produce better than 10-15 percent, while at the same time identifying the one who don't even deliver the minimum? That line of reasoning sounds as if it might lead to support for research on teacher education, but it generally doesn't. It is rather more of an "accountability" argument, and too often some who favor accountability simply are not willing to invest the dollars to find out more about teacher productivity. Their goal is reduced expenditures for education.

Three Other Factors

But times they are a'changing. For one thing, there are fewer students but more trained teachers. For another, the cost of education is increasing. And finally, competency-based teacher education has arrived on the scene.

12/ Personal communication.

Right now there are nearly 50 million students in public elementary and secondary schools. According to U. S. Office of Education estimates, there will be only about 40 million in 10 years. Public schools now employ slightly over 2.1 million teachers. The teacher training institutions graduated 181,000 teachers in 1966; 230,000 in 1973; and another 230,000 in 1974. Their 8-year average works out to about 200,000 per year.13/

The rate at which teachers leave the profession (for any reason) has been roughly 8 percent, or about 168,000 per year. That means there have been about 1,344,000 "vacancies" over the past eight years. In that same period the teacher training institutions have graduated 1,600,000.14/

Many of the "vacancies" are not filled. School districts are looking for ways to cut costs, and as enrollments drop entire schools are being closed. Recent graduates of teacher colleges are having difficulty finding jobs in their field. And, barring a dramatic increase in federal funds for education or a sudden surge in public interest in spending for handicapped, bilingual, exceptional, or pre-school children, there are going to be many more teachers than jobs available. That also means continued pressure on those now teaching to produce, and continued pressure to remove "imcompetent" teachers.

The cost of public education is an important piece of the puzzle. About 75 percent of the typical school district's budget goes for salaries and related personnel costs, including retirement. That percentage and the overall cost are increasing. With rising costs has come a concern for what is usually called "accountability," or "what are we getting for the money?" Many people associate public schools with lower test scores, overcrowding, teacher strikes, and (in the cities anyway) crime and racial unrest. To this, accountability proponents might add, "all that, and a bigger budget too?"

13/ The data came from several sources: U. S. Office of Education; National Education Association; AACTE; and an 8-year study done by the Rand Corporation, "Analysis of the Educational Personnel System."

14/ Ibid.

The desire to hold schools and teachers accountable (and to hold down costs) has been increasing and spreading. At the same time, those concerned with the education of teachers are aware of their own cul-de-sac: a plant "geared up" to produce 230,000 teachers a year, fewer new candidates, a frightfully tight job market, no more federal money, and (for state institutions) suspicious legislatures. Competency-based teacher education might provide an escape. Why not, serious educational researchers say, determine which specific parts of the teaching act are important and then train teachers to perform those functions? Let's figure out, they say, what competencies a good teacher ought to have and teach them to our students. When students demonstrate those competencies, let's certify them.15/

In fact, some of the 230,000 in the class of 1974 are products of the competency-based teacher education approach. They are not guaranteed to be competent teachers, because it is too early to tell whether CBTE makes a difference in what the teachers can do in the classroom. And no one knows whether student performance will be at all affected.

It is not too early, however, to examine the CBTE movement, and to consider what visible differences are likely if all teacher training becomes "competency-based." Will parents, students, and school districts be able to tell the difference? Will kids run joyfully to school, and will reading scores shoot up? Or will teachers come to resemble robots in their devotion to "mechanistic education," as some have charged?

What then is competency-based teacher education, how widespread is it, and what might it become?

It is a good bet that the man in the street has never heard of CBTE. But a teacher union leader calls it "quackery," a U. S. Office of Education official considers it "the most significant

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15/ See Houston, W.R., and Howsam, R.B., (eds.), Competency-Based Teacher Education: Progress, Problems, and Prospects, (Chicago: SRA, 1972); or W.R. Houston, Strategies and Resources for Developing a Competence-Based Teacher Education Program (Multi-State Consortium, New York, no date)

lever for educational reform since Sputnik," and many professors of education habitually hail it as "revolutionary."

In fact, the professors have been doing more than their share of talking. Articles about CBTE are standard fare in educational journals, which seem to treat the subject at least once in every issue. Most of the articles praise CBTE; others would bury it; and a few, unwittingly and with shovelfuls of jargonish platitudes, bury CBTE deeper than its critics could have wished.

What is absent from these writings generally is the larger picture: the world of public schools; shrinking enrollment; increasingly militant teachers; public dissatisfaction over student performance; and the costs of public education. Although one would not know it from reading educational journals, the movement to reform teacher training is part of a political struggle between increasingly militant teachers and those who have traditionally exercised control over public education.

The Origin of CBTE

It is impossible to deny the appeal of competence, and the name itself helps explain its appeal. The name does more though; it somehow implies that heretofore teachers have not been competent. It seems to promise a simple solution to complex educational problems. A student's progress through a CBTE program will depend on competence, and not on accumulated semester hours. The would-be teacher will be told in advance just what skills he/she is expected to demonstrate, and graduation/certification will follow skill demonstration, just as the aspiring driver knows what he or she must do to earn a driver's license.

CBTE also implies the potential to re-examine those now teaching, separate the competent from the incompetent, and remove or retrain the latter group. That potential (threat or promise) to re-examine is close to the heart of the controversy.

CBTE emerged as a burgeoning, unorganized movement in the 1970's, although experimentation and federal support began earlier. By now, 15 states are supposed to have adopted CBTE, either by law or by administrative fiat; and at least 11 others have taken some sort of affirmative action. In addition, there is a national

commission16/, 13 other national centers of one sort or another, a handful of newsletters, and hundreds of books and catalogs (including one that weighs 11 pounds) of available modules, minicourses, protocols, and other CBTE "tools". The movement's leaders, none of whom are household words, have become gurus in their own right. Their influence is generally restricted to the world of teacher education, where they are striving to be the "rational center" of a movement whose political implications defy rationality. Thus, two educators made the unlikely claim, "one almost immediate outcome of CBTE is the development of stronger relationships between teacher educators, the public schools, and the organized teaching profession."17/

That is misplaced optimism. The organized teaching profession shows no signs of supporting CBTE. AFT President David Selden writes that "it should be possible to do a better job of training and selecting teachers," but he stresses the "inherent dangers" of CBTE. "I am against CBTE," he has said, "the research just hasn't been done."18/ Albert Shanker of the United Federation of Teachers simply calls it "quackery."19/

Shanker and the National Education Association have also called for more research. The NEA suggests extreme caution because "CBTE is untested, there is almost negligible teacher involvement, and the 'p.r.' has far exceeded the reality."20/ The dismal history of educational evaluation is such that almost every study turns up "no significant difference" between those experimented with and thos left alone. Even though the explanation for this phenomenon probably lies with measurement techniques and not with the innovations themselves, cynics know full well that to evaluate is to at least slow down and perhaps doom some educational intrusion. Thus Shanker, NEA Executive Director Terry Herndon, and another CBTE opponent, Illinois Professor of Education Harry S. Broudy, have

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16/ Supported by a $170,000 grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and run on a day-to-day basis by Educational Testing Service of Princeton, N. J.

17/ Benjamin Rosner and Patricia M. Kay, "Will the Promise of C/PBTE be Fulfilled?" Phi Delta Kappan, January, 1974, p. 290.

18/ Personal communication.

19/ In an address at Adelphi University, November, 1973.

20/ Richard J. Cortright, personal communication.

joined the National Commission on Performance Based Education. From that vantage point they will undoubtedly call for "more research." Shanker's UFT issued that call early in 1972:

> "We will oppose any attempt to institute performance-based certification until validated research has been completed,"21/

Just who represents the public schools in all this (and is therefore supposed to develop a closer relationship with teacher educators and organized teachers as a result of CBTE) is not made clear. In a sense, everybody supports the schools; in another sense, nobody does. We all believe in public education, if not for our own children, then for everybody else's. But there is no organized lobby group with the clout of, say, doctors, railroads, or even conservationists.

There are groups like the Public Education Association in New York, the National Committee for Citizens in Education, and the Institute for Responsive Education, but those organizations are generally short on resources, public identity, and political influence. "The public interest" may be a euphemism for the administrators, who control procedures, or for those who hold the pursestrings--the school boards and the legislatures.

Neither school boards nor legislatures have reputations for sophistication about education. Boards tend to zero in on issues with broad political appeal, like busing, while state legislatures tend to worry more about the spiraling costs of public schools than about other aspects of education.

State boards of education have actually shown more interest in CBTE than have legislatures. Only the legislatures in Texas and California have passed laws requiring CBTE, and both states have

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21/ Performance Certification Committee of the United Federation of Teachers, "Committee Report," March, 1972. The Committee welcomed the interest in better teacher training, but reported that it would take from five to twenty years to do the required research.

run into problems, as we shall see. Just how many states have adopted CBTE seems to depend on who does the counting. The acknowledged authority on counting is Allen Schmeider of the U. S. Office of Education. He counts "nearly 20", with another 15 about to adopt CBTE. Others who used Schmeider's data and another survey put the number at 11 adoptions and seven "contemplations."22/ I used the same data and counted 15 actual adoptions and 11 probable. Half of the states said, in effect, "we are studying the question," a response which tells us nothing.

But whatever the exact figures, it is clear that there is a lot of activity. Florida, Texas, New York, California, Utah, and Oregon are the most active states. Only one state, Iowa, rejected CBTE outright, while Kentucky reported having had CBTE for many years. When individual colleges were queried, the same phenomenon occured; one college said it had been training teachers on the basis of competencies "since 1952."

Defining CBTE

Defining CBTE is not hard; what is difficult is determining who is doing what to whom, and whether the activity resembles that described in the definitions, one of which begins as follows:

> "A revolution is shaking teacher education in America--not a gradual, comfortable, deliberate development, but drastic upheaval and sudden climactic change."23/

22/ Schmeider's data are in "Competency-Based Teacher Education: The State of the Scene," AACTE, Washington, 1973. See also A.P. Wilson and W. W. Curtis, "The States Mandate Performance-Based Teacher Education," Phi Delta Kappan, September, 1973, p. 76; and M.G. Villeme, "Competency-Based Certification: A New Reality?" Educational Leadership, January, 1974, pp. 348-349.

23/ Kenneth H. Hansen, "Proposals for Programs: Promise and Performance," The School Administrator, August, 1972, p. 9. Se also Stanley Elam, "Performance-Based Teacher Education: What is the State of the Art?" (AACTE, Washington, 1971) and W.R. Houston and Howsam, R.B., (eds.), CBTE: Progress, Problems and Progress (Chicago: SRA, 1972)

After the rhetoric, the definition that emerges boils down to:

1) "Competencies" mean knowledge, skills, and behaviors that the teacher (or would-be teacher) must have.
2) Competencies are based on what teachers actually do in the classroom.
3) Criteria for determining competence are explicit and public.
4) Performance is the major source of evidence of competence.
5) Rate or progress through the program is determined by demonstrated competency (not time, semester hours, or some other standard)[24]

A close look at one institution that is advertised as competency-based might be an aid to understanding the concept. The School of Education at Weber State College in Ogden, Utah, has one of the oldest and best known CBTE programs.[25] Weber State made the switch in 1970 while the dean was home in bed, according to one of its professors of education. "Most of the education faculty wanted to go the CBTE route, but the dean was strongly opposed," this source said. "When he became seriously ill and took a leave of absence, we changed over. By the time he had recovered, we had switched over completely."[26]

24/ This is a composite definition and therefore difficult to acknowledge specifically, but see Stanley Elam, "Performance-Based Teacher Education: What is the State of the Art?" AACTE, Washington, 1971.

25/ This picture is drawn from several sources: Reese Parker, "Weber State College Evaluates IPTE After Three Years," Phi Delta Kappan, January, 1974, pp. 320-324; Caseel Burke, "The Individualized, Competency-Based System of Teacher Education at Weber State College," AACTE, Washington, 1972; "Utah Announces Performance Criteria," in PBTE Newsletter, September, 1972; and personal communications.

26/ Personal communication, in which the source assumed that he/she would not be identified.

Weber State organized its curriculum for education students into performance objectives, some 130 competencies, and into blocks of similar tasks. These became known as WILKITS, for "Weber Individualized Learning Kits." A typical WILKIT has four parts: 1) A behavioral objective (the desired competency); 2) prescribed learning experiences (to accomplish the objective); 3) pre-assessment and self-assessment tests (if appropriate); and 4) the proficiency assessment (telling the student how he will be tested for competence).

The competency and the criteria for determining whether it has been achieved are explicit and public. The competency is based on what a real teacher actually does, and performance determines progress. A WILKIT (or any other institution's module) designed to teach "the preparation and use of a lesson plan for social studies" is based on fact: e.g., most social studies teachers use lesson plans, and a teacher ought to be able to prepare one. Moreover, there's no good reason for a professor to devote one or two lectures to the preparation of such a plan, when each student can learn it on his own.

At Weber State and other competency-based institutions, the education student has few classes to attend. In addition to the WILKITS and student teaching, each student must spend 30 "contact hours" in elementary and secondary schools and 40 hours in an "interaction laboratory" of informal group experiences. The course ends with a post-student teaching seminar. Grading is on a credit/no credit basis, which means that a student can keep on trying.

Weber State's program has attracted a good deal of attention. Approximately 550 observers have found their way to Ogden,27/ and the Teacher Corps is supporting a project there. Weber State claims to have an 85-90 percent job placement rate, higher than any other teacher education program in Utah.

27/ But, I should add, I have not.

Problems at Weber State

But the image of hundreds of students completing their WILKITS, rapping in the "interaction laboratory," and student teaching--all with minimal faculty attention--is not accurate, according to Weber State's head of instructional development, Reese Parker. Weber students tend to wait until the last minute to complete their work. Like students in traditional colleges, those at Weber State face an "end-of-the-term" crunch. Students there complain about the lack of faculty contact and small group instruction, and they want fewer repetitive, time-consuming WILKITS. In fact, those who skip the "dull WILKITS" do as well on subsequent examinations as those who complete them. Skipping dull WILKITS shouldn't be a problem for anyone who can pass the test of competency. After all, that's what "competency-based" means.

But neither Weber State nor anyone else has really solved the problem of the competencies themselves. Which ones are related to learning and how are they identified? Weber State generally trusted its professional judgment on this matter, according to one professor there. But there is lots of help available. A researcher named Donald Cruikshank has identified 43 critical elements in teaching,28/ Weber State identified about 130, and its recent graduates have suggested another 100. The woods are full of researchers willing to identify the essential 100 or the critical 50. How valid any of them are is another question.

That is the basic flaw of CBTE--the lack of a proven relationship between teacher behavior and educational outcomes. CBTE at Weber State or anywhere else will be hard pressed to prove its value until there is convincing evidence.

CBTE's Problems: 1) Administrative and Political

CBTE has other problems, some of which are administrative and mechanical, and some of which are political and fiscal. Who decides what competencies are important? How are students trained

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28/ "Conceptualizing a Process for Teacher Education Curriculum Development," The Journal of Teacher Education, Vol. 22, Spring, 1971, pp. 73-82.

to achieve them? Who judges when mastery has been achieved? These are, when the wash is done, amenable to professional solution. Not only that, they are also closest to being solved.

The question of deciding what constitutes mastery is a narrow technical question. But since competencies, the required demonstration of mastery, and the results are all public, the entire process must be able to stand the light of day.

Theodore Andrews of the New York State Department of Education suggests "the more interest groups involved, the better."29/ That makes matters political, no longer technical. Decisions about important competencies ought to be made by the group, CBTE proponents say, but not without the experts. After all, the experts have already identified at least 1,000 (overlapping) competencies and published several catalogs, including the one weighing 11 pounds. There are training modules that can be bought or borrowed. But the experts suggest that the best training programs will be developed locally, with the assistance of experts and their modules.30/

Local development is a problem too, because some institutions have apparently taken last year's catalog of courses and dressed it in the garb of individualized modules and "mini-courses." As reported previously, it is just about impossible to get a fix on which states and which institutions are supporting CBTE. The Office of Education

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29/ Personal communication.

30/ See F.T. Sobol, "Evaluating Tested Products in Local Settings," A paper presented to the American Educational Research Association, April, 1974; F.T. Sobol, "General Teaching Skills Laboratory I," PBTE Newsletter, November, 1973; G. Morine, "Transforming the Product," A paper presented to the American Educational Research Association, April, 1974; N. Dodl (ed.), 1973 Florida Catalog of Teacher Competencies (Multi-State Consortium, New York, 1973); N.L. Gage et al, A Computerized Catalog of Teacher Training Products, (Center for Research and Development in Teaching, Palo Alto, Calif., 1973); and W.R. Houston et al, Resources for Performance-Based Education (Multi-State Consortium, New York, 1973)

estimates over 30 states are supporting CBTE. But as one OE official concedes, "It's hard to find a state that won't say it's at least looking at the problem."31/

It may be foolish to look for answers by asking the individual teacher colleges how up to date their training programs are, but a survey which did just that discovered that teacher training institutions are more up to date than their critics charge. Seventy-five percent of the 719 participating institutions indicate they use videotape and microteaching techniques in teacher training. More than half say they use simulation, interaction analysis, and learning modules, all important words in the vocabulary of CBTE.32/

But apparently most institutions wouldn't agree with the Office of Education official who called CBTE "the most significant lever for educational reform since Sputnik."33/ Only 16 percent felt that teaching performance should be evaluated by an outside agency. The rest indicated a preference for traditional certification criteria--training in "required" areas and a minimum knowledge level.

Shanker is among those who suspect that the changes are superficial.

> "After competency-based certification was imposed on on state last year, the State Education Department sent the form throughout the state and said that all programs must be stated in competency terms. Every institution sat down, figured what they were doing, and got hold of somebody willing to learn the terminology of "competency" and rewrote everything they were doing already and then sent it in...."34/

31/ Allen Schmeider, personal communication.
32/ AACTE and the National Commission did the survey, which has been widely reported in education journals.
33/ Schmeider, op. cit., p. 5.
34/ Shanker, op. cit.

Shanker did not identify the state, but it might conceivably have been the western state where a professor at one institution recalled:

> "It was great for a while. I had plenty of free time to work on my book and other projects, but when we had to write job recommendations for students, all I could say was, 'He passed modules 45-48.' We had almost no contact with the students."35/

If one cannot simply ask the institutions and the states if they would rather switch than fight--and if one cannot distinguish between real and superficial changes--the spread of CBTE cannot be measured accurately. Moreover, if nobody really knows which teacher competencies are important, what difference does CBTE's rate of growth really make? These are problems for the movement's "rational center," which we will look at later.

CBTE's Problems: 2) "Mindless Robots"

One problem is more or less philosophical. The notion of training for specific behaviors conjures up for some critics a picture of robots in the classroom. Every teacher is skillfully trained to ask "higher order questions," for example, or to elicit maximum classroom participation. But there is no feeling for the art of teaching, and perhaps there is no idea of what to ask questions about. For these critics, CBTE represents the threat of a reductionist world in which technician-teachers manipulate children.36/

Allen Schmeider of the U. S. Office of Education is a dedicated supporter of CBTE, but he admits that "since CBTE is a process, it could become the most vicious, fascistic method imaginable, and

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35/ Shanker, op. cit.
36/ H.S. Broudy, "A Critique of Performance-Based Teacher Education," (Washington, D. C.: AACTE, 1972); and P. Nash, "A Humanistic Approach to PBTE," (Washington, D. C.: AACTE, 1973)

some institutions undoubtedly will make mistakes that way." But, he adds, CBTE makes intuitive good sense. "We have always said that teaching is an art, and that's a lot of crap, a copout. There are things that a teacher can do better than the man in the street, however, and we can identify and train for them."37/

Probably the most familiar critic is Professor Broudy, author of the "Critique of Performance-Based Teacher Education."38/ To Broudy, the most offensive aspect of CBTE is the idea that the art of teaching can be reduced to a set of operations or tasks, and that students who master those tasks are competent teachers. Broudy and others argue that teaching is more than the sum of a set of operations or tasks, and that teachers who don't know the theory behind their training are merely "didactical technicians."

Poor Broudy! Most CBTE supporters just shrug off his criticism and accuse him of setting up a straw man. Of course, they say, good teaching is more than the sum of its component parts. Of course, they add, an understanding of educational theory is necessary. Who ever said it wasn't?

CBTE's Problems: 3) Cost

Other criticisms are financial, scientific, and political. The financial criticism is simple: CBTE costs too much to implement, even if it might save money over time. One study estimated that it would cost a university $1,000 per pupil just for the computer time. Another study predicted a cost of $500. USOE's Committee on National Program Priorities in Teacher Education estimated that a nationally-coordinated research and development effort in CBTE would cost $114 million over five years. The price of an uncoordinated effort would be even higher, that study warned. That $114 million would provide 100 training labs (total capacity 20,000 per year), and

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37/ Personal communication.
38/ Broudy, op. cit.

would develop 250 measures of competence for educational personnel.39/

The scientific criticism touched upon earlier is that CBTE has no data base. The critics say if you can't prove that one teaching method is better than others, how can you justify making catalogs of teaching competencies and require teachers to acquire them? The argument is unassailable, and the movement's best defense, as with Broudy's criticism, is acceptance. Your criticism is well taken, some say; we cannot prove it, so we will see that the basic research is done.

Basic Research, California Style

California has pushed boldly into the murky controversy, as that state often does. It has enacted legislation requiring all teacher training institutions to become competency-based even as the research on competencies is conducted. California has also passed separate legislation decreeing that the:

> "....evaluation and assessment of the performance of each certificated employee shall be made on a continuing basis, at least once each school year for probationary personnel, and at least every other year for personnel with permanent status."

In other words, prospective teachers will learn some competencies while researchers watch a selected number of experienced teachers to figure out what competencies are important.41/ Everyone now teaching will be evaluated according to performance, and teachers

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39/ See especially M.V. DeVault and M. Galladay, "An Operational Plan for Program Development in Teacher Education," in The Power of Competency-Based Teacher Education, Benjamin Rosner (ed.), (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1972) pp. 45-88.

40/ The passage is taken from the legislation.

41/ V. Koehler, "The California Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study", PBTE Newsletter, March, 1974; and "California Survey Shows CBE Status," PBTE Newsletter, December, 1972. Also personal communications with Frederick MacDonald and George Gustafson.

who don't measure up apparently will go back to school to learn the new competencies in the newly established CBTE programs (which may or may not be teaching "proven" competencies by then). It is "fiendishly clever," according to George Gustafson, who was involved in designing the plan. "Everyone has to be ready to change; every institution will be subject to close scrutiny." According to Gustafson, no teacher training facility can escape, although students are protected.42/ Each teacher college must provide those now enrolled with either standard or competency-based training, and they all will have to be fully competency-based when the research bears fruit in 1975.

Whether the research will bear fruit is an open question. The immense research task involves the identification of teacher effects and system effects; the study of teachers teaching in different ways; and the use of pupil change as the key determinant of competence. California began by identifying teachers whose students score well above the mean on standardized tests. Those teachers (who were willing) were then observed by researchers. "We had to see what they do in class," said Fred McDonald of Educational Testing Service. "Those behaviors may be competencies, but it is a lengthy, costly, cumbersome process to find out," McDonald added.43/

Meanwhile, California's teacher training institutions are "gearing up" to train "the CBTE way," so that when and if some competencies are validated by the research, the institutions will be ready. It's slightly surrealistic, like insisting that a guest is not dressed for the occasion and therefore must change clothes, without saying what the proper attire is. The poor misdressed soul will at least be accustomed to changing clothes when word finally arrives. California's teacher colleges seem to occupy an analogous position, but their complaints apparently have subsided. However, one inside source says, in effect, that everyone involved

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42/ Gustafson, personal communication.
43/ MacDonald, personal communication.

is running around naked. "It's a hoax," the source said. "The colleges aren't complaining because they aren't really changing. Most of them are just rewriting catalogs."44/

CBTE's Problems: 3) The Missing Data Base

Most responses to the problem of the missing data base are less complex. "If you accept the lack of a data base, then there's nothing to do," according to Andrews of New York. "We may have rushed headlong into CBTE, but talk about the 'need for reform' doesn't work." Andrews considers his approach plain common sense. "Even without data, we can have some conceptualization of the teacher's role, and those who train teachers ought to know what their program is trying to do."45/ Others dismiss the data base objections by ridiculing the present system. Let's adopt CBTE, they say, because it has to be better than the present system.

> "Our present program could be compared to a physician pumping a number of unidentified drugs into a patient, and then not knowing why the patient either recovered or died."46/

Or, when CBTE is attacked as dehumanizing, its defenders say, in effect, "so's your old man!"

> "Certainly nothing is more dehumanizing than the traditional instructor-student relationship in most institutions of higher learning where the student is often at the mercy of the capricious and often hidden criteria of the instructor."47/

44/ The source requested anonymity.
45/ Personal communication.
46/ R. Arends, R. Elmes, and Masla, J., "Controversial Issues Concerning Competency-Based Teacher Education," PBTE Newsletter, October, 1972.
47/ IBID.

CBTE's Problems: 5) The Academic Bureaucracy

Despite its intuitive appeal, CBTE might create a bureaucratic snarl. How will professors and education students be scheduled? Will tuition be determined by the number of courses or modules, the length of time, or the academic year?

If courses can be reduced to modules for individual learning, what will happen to the teacher? Perhaps course work will be academic "TV dinners." The professor, once a chef, will prepare "pre-cooked" CBTE courses. And if the meal is less satisfying than grandma's home-cooked turkey with all the fixings, at least everyone will pick his own dinner hour.

Bureaucratic snarls exist to be untangled, and certainly the necessary management systems ought to be possible. What is required is a system to monitor students through programs, ensure the availability of materials, provide and implement evaluation procedures, and ensure access to faculty.

Weber State hasn't solved these problems yet, so it is probably safe to assume that other institutions haven't either. Weber State's own evaluation concluded that students had not developed the self-discipline to escape the "tyranny" of the end-of-the-term rush. Students there want more class time and more faculty time. Despite a brand new Operations Center and all the paraphenalia associated with CBTE, Weber State looks and sounds quite a bit like many other teacher training institutions. That ought to help mollify those critics of CBTE who claim that its "anti-humanistic" methods will produce a generation of robot-like teachers.

CBTE's Problems: 6) The "Natural" Teacher

People who think very hard about CBTE sooner or later come up with the question about the "natural" teacher--the one who just intuitively "knows" how to teach. If and when teaching competencies are validated, will such a person be allowed to take the tests for competence, pass them, and go home with a teaching certificate? If he or she should enroll at a teacher training institution and demonstrate competence in the next day or two, what happens to tuition? Is it by the day, or by the competency? That is, does the student pay for skills possessed or skills acquired? And how will you tell the public that the superstar has to pay a year's tuition (or four year's?) for the privilege of taking and passing

the tests? Why shouldn't there be a token fee, something like court costs?

Thus far, teacher training institutions aren't settling for token fees. Everyone has to go through an approved institution and program. No walking in off the street if allowed. The question of tuition is a bit more difficult. New York is still considering the problem. Apparently no one thinks of it as a blessing, but imagine what a blessing it would be if a large number of teachers could pass the competency tests. Only the schools of education would suffer. Since it is a "problem," the general solution probably will be to make teachers pay for the skills and talents they have, whether or not they are acquired in the required schools, according to Andrews of New York.48/

CBTE's Problems: 7) Texas, Connecticut, and Rhode Island

In Texas, CBTE has had its ups and (most recently) downs. The Texas story49/ began in 1969, with the report of a 37-person Commission on Teacher Performance. That report said that the present system needed overhauling and recommended the adoption of CBTE over a 5-year transition period. The State Commissioner of Education ruled in June, 1972, that all schools of education had five years to become competency-based. His ruling caused a flurry of objections, mostly from "the arts and sciences interests," according to Assistant Commissioner Harlan Ford. They went to the legislature with their complaint that mandatory CBTE violated basic freedoms. There they won what Ford called "a hollow victory." It was a promise that a committee would study the situation.

Continued pressure led Commissioner J. W. Edgar to ask the state attorney general in August, 1973, for a ruling on the legality of mandatory CBTE. In January, 1974, the attorney general ruled

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48/ Personal Communication.
49/ See PBTE Newsletter, June, 1972, and April, 1973; Phi Delta Kappan, March, 1974, p. 369; W.R. Houston and R.B. Howsam, "CBTE/ The Ayes of Texas," and Ellis Sandoz, "CBTE/The Nays of Texas," Phi Delta Kappan, January, 1974, pp. 299-305.

that the commissioner had indeed exceeded his authority.

He ruled that the Texas Education Agency could make CBTE an alternative, but not the sole method of training teachers. Assistant Commissioner Ford called the ruling a split decision because, as he said, "In the last two years at least 60 of the more than 70 new programs that have applied for state approval have been competency-based. Teacher education in Texas is going to be largely competency-based in a few years time."50/

Connecticut and Rhode Island aren't rushing into CBTE by any stretch of the imagination. In Connecticut, a pro-CBTE bill has been bottled up in the legislature for two years. In Rhode Island, the governor recently rejected a request from the State Department of Education for $1 million for various CBTE projects. No money for CBTE was included in the final appropriations bill for fiscal 1975.

CBTE by Administrative Fiat: New York

New York is among the leaders in the CBTE movement.51/ It has the earliest requirements for a full switch to CBTE in one field of teacher training: all programs for the preparation of elementary and special education teachers must be competency-based by February, 1975. Moreover, all teacher preparation must be competency-based by 1980. The State Department of Education says its regulations have teeth. Teacher training programs must have certain elements--competencies, assessments procedures, cooperative planning groups, and feedback loops--or they will be "deregistered;" that is, they will lose their licenses. Since institutions cannot grant degrees without the approval of the commissioner of education,

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50/ Personal Communication.

51/ See "New York State Master Plan," PBTE Newsletter, November, 1972; A.P. Lierheimer, "The Movement Toward CBTE in New York," undated photocopy; CBC Newsletter #4&5, June and November, 1973; and Post-Secondary Education in New York, March/April, 1974. The discussion is also based on personal communication with Andrews and Sheldon Stott of Adelphi University.

Andrews feels that teacher training programs will have to change. Andrews admits that "we rushed headlong into it, and we expect some lawsuits." But, he says, the New York plan is flexible.

> "We are asking the institutions to tell us and the world what they are trying to train teachers to do, and to give us some evidence of how well they're doing. Training institutions ought to know what their programs are trying to do; they ought to have some conceptualization of the teacher's role."

The New York Board of Regents endorsed the competency-based approach in September, 1972. The Regents explained that since "approximately three-quarters of a school district's budget is directly related to the support of the professional staff", and since "rapid and significant changes have occurred in the economic, cultural, and educational facets of our society," there is a need for a thorough reform of teacher education, certification, and practice. The results, the Regents said, must be competency-based. The Regents took two bold albeit somewhat tentative steps beyond:

Pupil performance should be the underlying basis for judging teacher competence, they said. But they added a parenthetical escape clause: "(Such a basis is not now fully obtainable because of limited knowledge about measurement itself.)" The second step struck directly at teacher tenure: "Like other professions, teaching requires that professional personnel undergo continuous training. Consequently, teachers should be expected to demonstrate competency periodically to maintain certification."

"Periodically" is not explained. But, of course, the Regents' entire plan was carefully labelled "tentative." When it became effective in September, 1973, these particular ambiguities were not cleared up.

What are the likely effects on teachers and teacher education in New York? Leaving aside the question of pupil performance for the moment, there are two, perhaps three, areas of impact: 1) Certification and training will be more closely wedded, because starting in 1976, teachers must have a competency-based institution's stamp of approval; 2) inservice education will be competency-based by 1980, so that every teacher will have the "opportunity" to demonstrate competence regularly; 3) teacher training institutions are under the gun--they have to change or they will disappear. The Regents predict that the plan will "reduce the number and

scope of graduate degree programs in education." But the opposite might occur if every teacher must be recommended for recertification by an approved program. The plan does not say that anyone may attempt to show that he or she has the competencies required of a teacher. It says that anyone can go to an approved teacher training institution to do that. That is the carrot for the teacher training institutions; the action is still in their ballpark.

In New York, the hypothetical "natural" teacher won't be able to walk in off the street, pass the tests, and get a teaching certificate. He or she will have to enroll in a teacher training institution, pay some tuition, and graduate, even if that only takes as long as the tests themselves. In New York, anyway, there won't be new players in the game. But there will be changes in the distribution of power, if CBTE proceeds as planned.

Plans call for the switch to be made in three stages. First comes the "paper approval" of each institution's plans, followed (one year later) by an actual program review. Final approval will not be given until after "some" of the competency-trained teachers have been teaching for "some time" so that there has been "some" feedback. How many teachers? how many years of teaching? and what sort of feedback? The state department simply says?

> "Presumably the decision will be made after several years of operation--after graduates are in the field, and after program elements have been examined and recommendations followed."

Andrews explained that these questions haven't been answered yet, because the state department doesn't want to ask the impossible. He said that New York has been thinking "seriously" about CBTE for five years. The state has been funding some exploratory work for three years, he said, using over $400,000 in federal funds and, in fiscal 1974, $32,000 in state funds.

"Paper approval" must be completed by 1980. The last programs are those in special subjects, music, art and vocational education, which must submit their proposed new programs in 1979. Predicting the date of complete turnaround is impossible, although it cannot be until the last institutions have been turning out competency-trained teachers for "some" years, probably 1987 or thereabouts.

The New York Opposition

Opposition to CBTE in New York is political, philosophical, and practical. The political opposition centers around questions of determination of competencies and evaluation of classroom teachers. Some see CBTE as a devious way to abolish teacher job security (tenure), or to cut the education budget. The philosophical opposition amounts to either "teaching is an indivisible art", or "there is already too much regulation." The "practical" opponents worry that speed will kill CBTE.

In fact, the planned transition is not likely to go smoothly. Leading the opposition is Shanker, unquestionably the most powerful labor union leader in education, and an Adelphi University professor of education, Sheldon Stoff. Their opposition has been strengthened by the recent ruling in Texas. Said Stoff, "It is now clear that many states grossly violated basic freedoms by imposing one psychological framework in the registration of programs in teacher education."52/

New York is also a gross offender in Stoff's view, but he is confident the state will not make a serious attempt to enforce the changeover, which he calls "an unacceptable encroachment upon academic freedoms."53/

Adelphi's contribution to the debate was a conference in November 1973, at which the central question was, "Is This What We Want?" The question was rhetorical, as the list of speakers suggests: Shanker, Stoff, and the aforementioned "philosophical" opponent Broudy, attacked CBTE after the opening speaker (from the New York State Department of Education) offered a weak defense.

A conference is rarely an even-handed search for truth, of course, and CBTE supporters have been holding their own, literally and perhaps figuratively. The American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) has already helped sponsor about a dozen conferences. These include some to train people in CBTE

52/ Personal Communication.
53/ Ibid.

techniques. A loose confederation which sees itself as CBTE's "rational center" has sponsored several more.

Searching for the "Rational Center"

Actually, it's hard to find the "rational center," if indeed one exists. More than a handful of the movement's major figures aspire to that position: Karl Massanari of the AACTE, Schmeider of the U. S. Office of Education, Andrews of New York State, McDonald of Educational Testing Service and the National Commission, and a good many professors of education around the country (but especially in Texas and Florida).

CBTE needs a rational center. Several states have gone off the deep end and ordered an immediate crossover to CBTE without providing any funds. One legislative committee drew up a list of competencies for the state's teachers. That rush for instant teacher accountability dismays those who believe that, given enough financial support, researchers would identify (and professors could then impart) certain teaching skills.

The most likely candidate for the rational center is the new National Commission on Performance-Based Education, which has a $170,000 grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. NCPBE will try to coordinate and fill in the gaps, to "discover the link between what is competent teaching and how students learn," according to its chairperson pro tem, Elizabeth McCormack, recently retired president of Manhattanville College. The power behind the scenes is Fred McDonald of Educational Testing Service, a staunch advocate of CBTE and research in teaching generally. The national commission might do well to heed the words of OE's Schmeider, who has worked long and hard with the AACTE on CBTE. "We didn't set out to become an advocacy group," Schmeider now says, "but I'm afraid that's what we are."54/

Schmeider and Karl Massanari of the AACTE are caught in something of a bind. Both men want to encourage the rational development of

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54/ Personal Communication.

CBTE, but their encouragement to teacher training institutions has contributed to the hasty actions of legislatures and state departments of education. As Massanari said, "Most of the 20 states that have adopted CBTE have not really thought about what it is. Accountability--the desire to save money and get rid of incompetent teachers--is the reason CBTE goes through.55/

Schmeider and Massanari are not mere cheerleaders for CBTE. In fact, both have a vision of the ideal: enough money, sophisticated experience, outside help, limited experimentation in only three or four colleges, flexible certification for CBTE graduates, and a 4- or 5-year period of grace. But that is not happening anywhere.

CBTE and the U. S. Office of Education

The Office of Education cannot claim to represent CBTE's rational center, even though the roots of CBTE are found in nine "elementary teacher training models"56/ supported by OE in 1967, and in OE's Teacher Corps, which has enthusiastically promoted CBTE since 1971.57/ OE's overall support has been sporadic and uncoordinated. Schmeider and James Steffensen of the Teacher Corps are probably responsible for most of the federal dollars spent on CBTE to date, but it is hard to determine the total. Schmeider estimates about $15 million through the end of fiscal year 1973, but his "good guess" doesn't include Teacher Corps expenditures. OE's National Center for the Improvement of Educational Systems, where Schmeider works, spent about $3.2 million from fiscal 1971 through fiscal 1974. That money supported a variety of projects: a "dialogue project" with the AACTE; a multi-state consortium of 11 states; regional CBTE centers (based on the nine models); a consortium of CBTE centers at Florida State University; four models of "whole-

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55/ Personal Communication.
56/ "Elementary Teacher Training Models," E.J. Blewett (ed.), U. S. Govt. Printing Office, December, 1969.
57/ See "Teacher Corps in 1973," PBTE Newsletter, March, 1973, pp. 1-12. One ranking Teacher Corps official told me that the Corps' adoption and promotion of CBTE was "a charade to attract attention and money."

state" cooperation; a leadership training program at the University of South Florida; and a southern consortium of black teacher training institutions.58/ It's a pattern of transfusions, with annual aid to keep the "movement" growing here and there. And it seems to support the view that OE has been more of an advocate than anything else.

Looking Inward in Houston

What is striking about CBTE and its supporters is a reflexive tendency to gaze inward, away from the political questions of educational accountability, control of public education, teacher militancy, and the like. Instead, CBTE's supporters focus on research methodology, module development, and, of course, attracting new students. A National Conference on Competency Assessment, Research and Evaluation at the University of Houston in March was a case in point. Those at the conference spoke of CBTE as a way of convincing state legislatures not to cut their appropriations, or of attracting would-be-teachers.

Speakers urging a wider view provoked anger from a few, but most listeners were blasé. Former New York City School Chancellor Harvey Scribner outlined some of the labor-management issues involved in CBTE, but it took the surprise appearance of a streaker to arouse his audience. Don Davies, former U.S. Deputy Commissioner of Education, warned his audience of professors, researchers and state officials about the narrowness of CBTE. Davies compared teacher education to a ghetto ("Nobody really cares about teacher education"). He argued that teachers ought to be trained in the public schools. What is more, Davies said, none of their research is likely to be used in decision-making. "I cannot think of one major decision in the Office of Education that was influenced by research and evaluation," said Davies, who spent nearly five years in leadership positions in USOE.

Davies' and Scribner's harsh comments provoked little response. The teacher-educators who support CBTE simply do not consider it

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58/ Personal communication.

a labor-management issue or a political question. "CBTE is essentially neutral," Schmeider said in response to Davies. "What we do with it determines whether it is mechanistic or humanistic."

The Heart of the Matter

Schmeider, Massanari, and others of that persuasion miss the point. The issues are larger than CBTE's "mechanistic" or "humanistic" nature. Finally, it is a labor-management issue, in which the real enemy may be history. That is the view of Norman Drachler, former Superintendent of Schools in Detroit and Director of the Institute for Educational Leadership. "Historically, teachers have been underpaid. For years school boards have hired women, knowing that those who didn't leave to raise families were either single or supplemental wage earners, and thus unlikely to create a fuss over salaries.59/

Scribner stresses a similar point: "On matters of hiring, the unions say 'last hired, first fired,' but boards want to be rid of older, better-paid teachers. Neither of these operating principles has the slightest thing to do with performance criteria, but both sides will use the language of CBTE."

It seems ironic that those responsible for teacher training are developing CBTE, which is likely to be turned against militant teachers. The teacher training institutions are having budget problems of their own, and state legislatures--not teacher unions--hold the purse-strings. This is not to say that teacher training institutions are merely spear-carriers for the accountability forces, but the movement cannot see beyond itself. CBTE's future, if it has one, is in teacher retraining, which the state government has the power to require. And the self-interest of the teacher training institutions is more closely aligned with those of state governments than with the interests of teachers. There won't be a united front of teachers and teacher-trainers on this issue at least. In fact, CBTE could become the spike in the heart of

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59/ Personal communication.

the teacher militancy movement,60/ by providing a spurious "scientific" way to measure teacher performance and cull "substandard" teachers from the payroll.

Money matters are involved, of course. Ordinary citizens are generally willing to dig deep to pay for quality education ("quality" is hard to define, but for many it means non-turbulent, non-permissive, religiously-oriented, or segregated). However, education is the only municipal expenditure on which most voters regularly have the opportunity to pass judgment at the polls. And the vote is more often than not a resounding "no!" Many political observers attribute this to a generalized resentment against rising taxes, inflation, and government generally. The voters aren't against schools, just against spending generally, and they simply cannot understand why teachers (who "go home at 3 o'clock and get their summers off") deserve more money. It does help explain the appeal of accountability.

The language used by CBTE's respectable supporters in the research community fits easily into the campaigns against larger education budgets and tenure. That unplanned partnership is CBTE's greatest problem. If the terminology has not existed, someone favoring accountability would have invented it. But because the language does exist, teacher education that is "truly" competency-based may not emerge.

Those who want to cut education budgets hardly favor increased spending on educational research, but there can be no genuine CBTE until research (which is expensive) identifies the competencies a successful teacher must have. Perhaps one kind of teacher training "works" with some kids and not with others; perhaps the human qualities of warmth, humor, and concern mix with committment and

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60/ Credit for the striking image goes to Martin Burlingame of the National Institute of Education, who wrote in March, 1974, that "Competency-based teacher education becomes, for many legislators, the silver spike they can drive into the heart of the dollar vampire of teacher groups." Address to The Associates Program, Denver, Colorado, March, 1974 (photocopy), p. 8.

organization to produce good teaching. But questions about competency-based teacher education are no longer educational ones; they are political. And that seems to mean that judgments about the competence of teachers will be made in the same old ways, though probably more often and perhaps more harshly.

PART II

RESPONSES TO "THE POLITICS OF COMPETENCE: A REVIEW OF COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION"

A. An Essay on "The Politics of Competence"
Bernard H. McKenna, National Education Association

According to "The Politics of Competence", Al Schmeider of the U. S. Office of Education has said that "CBTE is essentially neutral." A major contribution of author John Merrow may well be the documentation of the fallacy of that statement. On other issues Merrow doesn't come across so well.

To the substance of competence, Merrow applies a broad brush stroke and a breezy journalistic style. He touches on the informal evaluations of parents, the less-than-commendable selection procedures of school districts, and the credit-hours-over-time approaches of schools of education. But he fails to deal much with the important past and present efforts (and future potential) in research and development on teacher performances appropriate to improving learning tasks of students, and how these efforts affect the political milieu he identifies.

While most would agree that too little has been done. It is true that those few efforts of rigor have produced results insufficient for important decision-making, and that priorities placed on seeking such answers have been generally low. But there are some beginnings worth pursuing didn't originate with the variety of catalogs emerging from the competency-based movement. At least they didn't originate as primary sources.

There are such beginnings as those identified by interaction analysis. (Isn't it helpful for a teacher to know how much of his or her time is spent lecturing, and for what purposes, even if lecturing shouldn't be encouraged as the major teaching strategy?) There are the indices of individualization, and attention to creativity and diversity reflected in instruments of the indicators of quality variety. And there are those few promising studies identified by Rosenshine in which several behaviors, such as "clarity," are shown to relate to some educational outcomes. One would wish that Merrow had cited some of these and suggested a research and development agenda with adequate time line and appropriate governance mechanisms. These (including the organized profession on a parity basis) would serve as one possible approach to the solution of the political entanglements he quite correctly identifies.

The organized profession is not opposed to the concept of identifying

competence, and it has so demonstrated. Both NEA and AFT affiliates are currently cooperating constructively in such efforts. On the NEA side, the Washington Education Association has been jointly involved with the state education agency and higher institutions in a re-certification effort in that state, based on the CBTE concept, since 1968. And in New York City the AFT affiliate is fully involved in trying out an accountability model, the development of which it has monitored and supported.

But the organized profession does object to mandating implementation which is based on little or no research and which appears to promise more harm than good to the profession. When CBTE has been carefully researched, developed, tested and tried, found valid and reliable, and capable of being implemented constructively and justly, the organized profession will stand ready to support it.

Furthermore, Merrow seems to take for granted the use of standardized tests as a continuing major criterion of the outcome of schooling--perhaps the major criterion. Even though he acknowledges there is little evidence to prove that higher test scores lead to happiness, success, or wealth, he plows ahead, discoursing the problems of relating competence to test scores. A more creative approach might have been to acknowledge the possiblity that the commonly used criteria of school achievement are part of the problem. It is necessary to call attention to the variety of other possibilities for evaluating educational outcomes (including the important one of professional judgment), and to explore the political ramifications of such an approach.

The section on "The Origin of CBTE" appears to be a misnomer. Little in this section speaks to the origin of competency-based teacher education except that it emerged in the 1970's. Neither institutions nor individuals are identified as initiators of the concept. And no speculation is provided as to why the concepts is emerging at this time. The section is really a rundown on where several groups--among them the organized profession and representatives of the public--stand on CBTE.

The "Definition" section also appears to be a mixed bag. It turns out to be more of a case-in-point presentation of the Weber State situation, and it points up the problem of validating competencies. The latter is certainly a topic worthy of the deepest consideration. In this reviewer's opinion, it will remain for a long time the

keystone by which the competency-based movement stands or becomes a house of cards.

Toward the end where Merrow gets into some of the simplistic accountability issues--saving money and getting rid of the incompetents--much can be made of the citation from Theodore Andrews: "We are asking the institutions to tell us and the world what they are trying to train teachers to do, and to give us some evidence of how well they're doing."

If this were the current extent of the concept in the New York plan (and all other CBTE operations), and if implementations conformed to and didn't exceed this concept (except for carefully controlled experiments), the political problems with the organized profession cited by Merrow would be minimized. In a recent statement on accountability, NEA, for example, defines this concept in terms highly consistent with the Andrews pronouncement. The NEA says that "our efforts in achieving educational accountability should be directed toward having schools state with as much clarity as is possible what it is they intend to do, then state with as much honesty as is possible how well it is being done...." Since CBTE has come to be so closely identified with the accountability movement, the implications of this pronouncement are obvious.

In a final section on "The Heart of the Matter", Merrow make the point that "CBTE's future, if it has one, is in teacher retraining...." Perhaps it ought to be so, at least for the immediate future which doesn't promise increased demands for large numbers of new teachers. But from the way CBTE has been promoted to date, it appears to focus more on easily observed (or counted) minimal entry skills than on sophisticated approaches to professional development for seasoned practitioners. Even if the emphasis ought to be on the inservice side, that doesn't mean the organized profession has no interest in the kind of preparation that will be afforded those who join its ranks as new colleagues. The NEA's active participation and influence on the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, and NEA's push for state standards and licensure commissions, well illustrate a strong interest in preservice preparation on the part of the organized profession. One hopes that CBTE efforts will result in research and development which include an appropraite balance of the two. Nonetheless, the NEA is in full agreement with Merrow that the big job to be done is in the arena of retraining--we prefer to call it teacher-centered

professional development, and view it as a career-long process.

On Merrow's point about professional development, "which state government has the power to require," we have some problems. We fully accept the idea that, for the control of educaton, the state government and its duly delegated authorities--state education departments and local school administrations--are the appropriate agencies. But inservice education is a professional matter for which the profession should have major governing authority, and John Merrow seems to have missed that point. Unless and until education can achieve teacher-centered inservice education of proportions that far transcend current arrangements, present problems of the opportunity for competent teachers to perform competently will persist. Teachers are weary of the kind of inservice forced on them by local school administrators, and the cash-register courses perpetrated by schools of education. Neither of these are very often worth a tinker's damn in helping to improve instruction in their classrooms.

On the whole, "The Politics of Competence" reflects much of the conventional approach of academic sociology--description of the conditions of a society and identification of some of the syndromes associated with it. The presentation ends on a despondent note. It's fine to criticize. But the gadfly type of criticism, with little or no constructive advice on how identified syndromes might be dealt with, is less than useful when problems cry out from all quarters for solution.

This last point is particularly significant when one considers that the piece was commissioned by the National Institute of Education. It seems reasonable to expect that if an important purpose of NIE is to research current pressing problems in education, raising issues as Merrow did would serve a better purpose if accompanied by some conjecture on approaches to resolving these issues. At least, he raises some important issues and does it well.

B. Response from a Weber State Student
Sandra R. Shupe

As a student in a CBTE program, I am responding to Dr. Merrow's report, "The Politics of Competence: A Review of Competency-Based Teacher Education." I have just completed certification in

secondary education at Weber State College.

I graduated, with a B.A. from Weber State College in 1965. English was my major and political science my minor. I did not certify to teach because I planned to write. I worked as a copywriter for a department store and radio station, after graduation. In 1965, many students certified with the idea that if they didn't find work in their chosen field, they could always teach.

The general feeling communicated by students in education was frustration at having to take boring classes with no applicability. The finest teacher I had in my own school experience felt nothing he had studied in his education classes helped him develop his teaching style. He advised me to complete my major, and if I decided to teach, I could always certify later.

When I decided to return to Weber State to certify, I had taught several years in church and had received church developed training. I had owned and operated my own finishing and modeling school where I taught my students and my teachers for three years. I had also taught personal development for two years at Stevens Henegar College, a local business college. I was prepared for a stale teacher training program and I hoped to survive the boredom by taking at least one stimulating class in English literature or creative writing each quarter.

I was delighted to find the interaction lab introspective, the WILKITS interesting, the learning experiences rewarding, and the instructors caring. I never needed to take my survival classes. My fellow education students seemed to believe teaching was an honorable profession and not a second career choice. No one rejected the program on the basis of boredom or lack of application. The comparison of attitudes alone gives me faith in CBTE.

I don't believe the question is should CBTE be mandatory, but how can CBTE best be communicated and implemented. I don't think problems at Weber State pointed out by Dr. Merrow are inherent to CBTE. They are problems which can be resolved within the CBTE framework. The "end-of-the-term" crunch could be the price paid by instructors for their relative freedom during the rest of the quarter. It also could be alleviated by creating deadlines within the quarter rather than having a deadline only at the end.

I did not find lack of faculty contact a problem. I was able to see any instructor within a day after making my request. Usually I just waited outside his office until he had a break and stuck my head in his door. I did find a shortage of references in the IPT library. When I couldn't get the books for reading in one WILKIT, I went to the instructor and asked for his copy. He sat me down and gave me a verbal explanation of the reading and talked it over with me until he was sure I understood. This was may first contact with this instructor, yet he asked about my possibilities for employment and discussed some of my attitudes on teaching and educational reform.

I did not feel a lack of small group instruction. I even skipped some seminars because I didn't feel I needed them. A student who feels a need for instruction can organize a seminar or make an appointment for help through the Operations Center.

I did not find WILKITS repetetive, though they were time consuming. Yet I skipped few learning experiences even when told by other students that the test could be passed and the check-out made without the units. I found each learning experience helped me with an attitude or skill I could have used in my previous teaching. Therefore, I certainly felt they would help me in the future.

I don't know anyone who skipped "dull WILKITS." Each student must pass out of the WILKIT through the required instructor or his back up. A student could skip learning experiences and check-out by demonstrating competency.

Identifying Competencies

The argument that competencies have not been identified is not valid. Weber State College has identified them, and is teaching those competencies so that graduates are more employable than graduates of other universities in Utah. Just getting through the program demonstrates the student is able to use initiative, interact with others, motivate himself, and set a plan of action and fellow through, on it. Those who cannot perform quit or try again until they learn. The WILKIT program is flexible enough that new concepts can be added, deleted, or changed as research indicates. Because CBTE is turning out better teachers, it has proved its value. That is true whether or not the actual rate of improvement can be graphed.

Identifying basic competencies is a problem. However, there are some basic competencies that are generally agreed upon.

A good place to begin, as Dr. Merrow suggests, is that an effective teacher is warm, responsive, clear, organized, and enthusiastic. Several of the WILKITS were designed to develop greater competency in these areas. Examples follow:

WILKIT 12, "Self-Concept," dealt with the necessity for developing a good self-concept and helping the students do likewise. One competency demonstrated was the ability to respond to student behavior according to Ginott's model in Between Parent and Child. This is one skill I've been trying to develop in interacting with my own children. We were also referred to Ginott's Between Parent and Teen-Ager, which I have used as a bible in dealing with the foster children we have taken in our home.

WILKIT 7, "Principles of Reinforcement," required an attempt to change three behaviors by positive reinforcement. I was amazed at how well this worked on my child. I have seen the need for positive reinforcement in all areas of interaction with others and have worked hard to develop this skill in all my leadership roles.

WILKIT 2, "Lesson and Unit Planning," helped me organize lessons and units. I used the lesson plan throughout my student teaching, and plan to use it in my own teaching. I tend to try teaching too many concepts at a time, and the lesson plan keeps me on the right track. WILKIT 1, "The Four C's of Learning," also helped me organize and make lessons meaningful to students.

WILKIT 4, "Classroom Management and Discipline," required a reality therapy session where both student and teacher came to a clear understanding of problem and solution.

A Purposeful Program

I cannot agree with the "mindless robot" argument. Anyone who seriously looks at a competent CBTE program would find just the opposite is true. What is more mindless than sitting in a classroom, taking notes, and learning to parrot the answers? Nothing in my CBTE training indicated that "the art of teaching can be reduced to a set of operations or tasks, and that students who

master these tasks are competent teachers." I feel that my CBTE training has allowed me to demonstrate the effectiveness of some basic skills to help me provide an atmosphere where students may learn. My sensitivity for the students will help me find the right skills to motivate them to learn. The interaction lab demonstrated the ideal that communication is a teacher's basic tool and many WILKITS reinforced the idea that teachers must relate to students to be effective. One learning experience was to demonstrate caring for a student and helping him build a positive self-image and a desire for change.

There will always be room for improvement in any system. Because CBTE is not perfect at Weber State, does not mean there is a bureaucratic snarl. There are students who want more class time because they have not developed the initiative to get going on their own. If these students are given more class time, won't that destroy the need for initiative? How can a person teach in the public schools without it? I did not want more class time or more faculty time and talked to many other students who felt the same. I, too, was sometimes caught in the end-of-the-term rush. Yet instructors were still cordial and it did not seem much different from traditional final week.

As a certified student, I completed a CBTE program with potentially good teachers who may not find jobs. Meanwhile, the system shelters many terribly incompetent teachers. I am angry. I would expect all competent teachers to be angry. But they are afraid.

The need to identify competencies if great not just for potential teachers but also for teachers in the system. Perhaps if a standard were set, competent teachers would recognize themselves and support a program that removes poor teachers. As the system operates now, administrators and teachers feel an ethical obligation to protect even poor teachers. As a parent and an educator, I feel poor teachers need to be identified and given an opportunity to improve. If they cannot or will not improve, there should be a means to remove them from the profession.

I believe the CBTE program has more to offer the "natural" teacher than the traditional teacher education program. The potential teacher can strive for competency above the minimum, thereby becoming more employable. Training in education involves a great time of investment, and the "natural" teacher is rewarded by a

reduction in time needed for proficiency. If a teacher training program has nothing to offer a "natural" teacher, it is not teaching a desire for competence.

As a graduate of CBTE at Weber State College, I'm surprised there is so much opposition to CBTE. I would expect every university to begin the plan's implementation. I do understand reason for opposition to the program. In the CBTE program at WSC we were given many opportunities to observe as well as participate in classrooms. I was surprised to observe how defensive teachers are about CBTE. Teachers are not sure of their own competence, so CBTE is a threat. However, once competencies are identified and everyone is given the opportunity to prove competence, only the incompetent will be threatened. I suspect that it is the incompetent teachers who are so vocal in opposition to the plan.

I am glad I was able to certify under the CBTE program at Weber State College. I feel I have a good base to begin teaching. When I do find a problem situation, I have my WILKITS available for reference. I also feel I have several Weber State instructors I can contact for assistance.

The CBTE instructors at Weber State College did know their students. I think at least three of mine could write an accurate reference for me and outline my strong and weak points. I also feel they have a good rapport with surrounding school districts. These personal references from instructors mean a great deal to me.

I personally believe the future of education is CBTE, and would recommend it for all prospective teachers. I would also petition, lobby, and campaign for it as a thinking parent.

C. Another Response from a Weber State Student
Clark Baron

As a recent graduate of Weber State College and a participant in the new competency-based teacher education program, I appreciate the opportunity to discuss some aspects of the program and comment on Dr. Merrow's evaluation of CBTE.

First, a little background might be helpful. While pursuing my degree, I did not take any education classes, but concentrated on

math and electronics. After graduation, I entered the CBTE program and found it to be very refreshing. Performanc-based teacher education, as it is called at Weber State, allows the student to complete the education subject blocks as rapidly as he can.

These blocks are known as Weber Individualized Learning Kits, or "WILKITS". If a student's major is psychology, for example, he would probably complete the educational psychology WILKITS in a few days and have the rest of the quarter to concentrate on other aspects of education.

As a graduate student, I registered for a full load of WILKITS (I had no other required classes). After completing the WILKITS related to my major field I started working on another block. Whenever I encountered problems or needed help in a subject, I would schedule a conference with the instructor. The instructors were always available if scheduling was done one or two days in advance.

After completing the experiences and mastering the objectives stated in the WILKIT, I would again meet with the faculty adviser to be tested for competence in that field. The Interaction Laboratory proved to be especially interesting and helpful. Participation at this seven Lab was tremendous, with an average attendance of 90 percent of those registered.

Webers' CBTE program requires that the student spend many hours actually in the local schools, teaching, tutoring, and observing. Of course, if a student can demonstrate competency in the field, the experiences can be cut short. The sue of video recorders for practice teaching is basic to Webers' program. Using other students for practice teaching is also suggested. The video "microteaching", peer teaching and actual classroom teaching gives the CBTE student an opportunity to practice the skills that he has learned.

Each student who has completed a WILKIT has a real sense of pride in having learned a demonstratable skill, not just a nebulus concept or idea. Teachers who have received certificates through Webers' CBTE program report that the WILKITS are extremely helpful in the classroom for reference purposes. They help in unit and lesson planning, writing behavioral objectives, and using higher order questions.

Dr. Merrow's article points out some problems with CBTE which I feel Weber is overcoming. The opponents of CBTE suggest that it will produce "mindless robots" instead of teachers. Nothing could be further from the truth. Instead of learning about the emotional problems of children with 28 prospective teachers, the CBTE student actually goes to the public schools and helps the children. This first hand, personal, contact with children gives the CBTE student a real sense of understanding of and sympathy for the child with a problem.

The bureaucratic snarl which did exist at Weber's CBTE program has been largely ironed out. The process of scheduling teachers and students has become very manageable through the introduction of a new WILKIT on "How to survive the WILKIT program," and a streamlined "operations" or control center.

Feedback channels have been opened to students with suggestions or problems. These feedback channels keep the system operating smoothly even during the "end-of-quarter-rush". If an instructor is busy you may schedule an appointment with another.

A word or two concerning the "end-of-term-rush" is necessary here. First, it is true that there is a rush, but the reasons for it vary.

Because of the rigorous requirements of the program and the inability of some students to start a program on their own, Weber has a large number of students who do not complete a block of WILKITS in one quarter. They are therefore recycled through the same block the next quarter. During the history of the CBTE program, up to 70 percent of the students in one quarter have been recycled to the next quarter. Since self-discipline is one of the competencies needed by teachers, the students are recycled until this skill is mastered. The student who is self-motivated will have little trouble in a CBTE program and much less trouble in the public schools.

This alone makes CBTE worthwhile. Self-motivation is one quality that students don't usually learn in the conventional class situation. Teachers whose education stops when they start to teach lack self-motivation. Teachers who use the same lesson plans and approaches for 10 years in a row lack self-motivation. CBTE requires students to be self-motivated and thus increases the

quality of the new teachers. Re-certification requirements could help the presently non-motivated teacher by requiring that competency-based courses be taken.

The "natural" teacher, or the student with a natural ability to teach, can complete the program, receive the credits, and obtain a certificate as quickly as he can pass the competency tests for each subject. The question of tuition for the "natural" teacher is still largely unsettled.

In summary, CBTE should replace the conventional classroom education, because of the following advantages:

1) CBTE teaches self-motivation and eliminates the non-motivated or lazy student.
2) Time is not wasted on skills already learned.
3) Well stated behavioral objectives show the student exactly what is required of him and what skills he needs to learn.
4) Much time is available in public schools for CBTE students to observe, tutor, and participate; thus giving them an opportunity to use their new skills.
5) The CBTE manuals at Weber make excellent reference sources for later study.
6) More time is available for students to discuss subjects on a one-to-one basis with the instructors.
7) CBTE increases the student's confidence in his ability as a teacher, because his skills are demonstratable.
8) And last, if a student is unable or unwilling to learn a necessary skill, he finds this out in school rather than during his first year of teaching.

D. Response to John Merrow's Report on CBTE
Don Davies, U. S. Office of Education

John Merrow's irreverent report on competency-based teacher education is likely to displease nearly everyone who is involved in one way or another in advocating, opposing, or working in the CBTE movement. Nevertheless, the report does exactly what needs to be done. It deflates some of the puffery that afflicts this and most other movements in education. It provides a lively, even if somewhat disheartening, story of the adventures and

misadventures of another one of those educational innovations. And, most important of all, it puts CBTE squarely in its political setting. Hence, it will be helpful for all those who are trying to understand what all the fuss and bother is about.

I agree with Merrow's conclusion that CBTE is both a labor-management issue and a political question. In a speech at the National Conference on Competency Assessment, Research, and Evaluation at the University of Houston in March 1974, I asked the question: Will competency-based teacher education remain largely a research and development effort, focused mainly on changing teacher education programs in colleges and universities? or will it move into the larger arena, such as teacher competence, the range of things represented by the slogan "accountability", the measurement of the success of schools, the involvement of the community in educational decision-making, and the evaluation of professional personnel?1/

I didn't answer my own question. But I did point out that the first direction (R&D) is relatively manageable and non-controversial. The chances of succeeding are relatively good--if this is the direction chosen. But the narrowness of the objectives means that the entire enterprise will be relatively insignificant. The path of highest potential success is also the path to triviality. If the second direction is chosen, the competency-based movement will suddenly be center stage and mainstream activity surrounded by extraordinarily complex and controversial problems and issues. This direction is obviously the significant one, the one in which the activities could have profound impact. But it is also a direction in which chances of success are very slim indeed.

Merrow's report maintains that CBTE's supporters have chosen the first direction and are gazing inward, away from the political questions of educational accountability, control of public education, and teacher militancy. They are focusing on research, methodology, and module development. He asserts: "The movement cannot see beyond itself." As Merrow suggests very briefly, the main result

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1/ Don Davies. "Some Unscholarly Views on Institutional Change." (Speech delivered to the National Conference in Competency Assessment, Research, and Development, University of Houston, Texas, March 15, 1974.)

of this inward gazing is not likely to be more money for teacher competency research, but increasing misuse of the CBTE idea and methodology by local and state politicians whose primary motivation is controlling the rising costs of public schooling, or driving a "spike in the heart of teacher militancy." The saddest part is that nearly everyone loses sight of the primary reason for all of the expenditure of time, talent, and money--better education for children in our schools.

Roots of CBTE

Merrow does not suggest possible ways to avoid the bleak future he foresees. This is a major inadequacy of the report. A second is inadequate attention to the roots and origins of the movement. I want to respond briefly to both these limitations. I feel some aspects of the history of the movement may be helpful to those interested in creating a more promising future.

I can best respond to the question of origins by recalling my own feelings and views in the late 1960's and early 1970's, when CBTE was first developing in its present forms. The U. S. Office of Education was then considering whether and how to provide support. As an Office of Education official (read: bureaucrat) I reacted positively to the CBTE development because it seemed to offer one promising avenue toward the solution of four problems that seemed of top priority to me and others who were advocating reform in education.

First, there was the fact that most schools were not adequately serving the needs of very substantial numbers of their clients, particularly children who were poor and from backgrounds different from the white, middle class mainstream. Schools, especially in the cities, were not responding imaginatively, positively, and effectively to the diverse needs and interests of their clients--students, parents, other community residents. The curriculum was racially and culturally narrow and biased. Many teachers and administrators seemed unable, because of attitudes or lack of adequate preparation or both, to change. The child and his home were blamed for failure in school.

Second, certification requirements and the examinations required by many city school districts were rigid, tied to conventional

courses, and a uniform view of job qualifications. They made it difficult for minority people and others with non-conventional backgrounds and experience to qualify for jobs as teachers and administrators. Requirements were based on a person's ability to pass specified courses and examinations and to accumulate specified credits and degrees, and seemed to have little demonstrable relationship to the quality of performance on the job.

Third, teacher preparation programs (both preservice and inservice) were not responding adequately to the changing needs in the schools and in society, and seemed not to have much impact on the behavior of their graduates in the classroom. Teacher education programs were still afflicted by myriad, long-standing problems. They were badly supported by the universities, having low status and attracting less than a reasonable share of the most competent and promising students or faculty. They were often neglected by the schools of education of which they were a part, ranking low in priority in relationship to research and advanced graduate degree programs. They were often isolated from the liberal arts faculties in the universities as well as from the public schools. In addition, they were clearly out of touch with the poor and minority communities to be served by many of the staff they were preparing.

Fourth, school programs were unresponsive to the communities they served. The programs were highly centralized, rigidly bureaucratic, and overly-professionalized. Students, parents, and other community residents had little influence on important decisions in the schools. Local and state government officials, legislators, and taxpayers were greatly concerned as costs rose dramatically faster than improved quality of education. Demands that the schools become "accountable" to the public were widespread. The professional education establishment and the newly militant and powerful teachers organizations were largely opposed to opening up the decision-making processes to non-professionals at either the local or state level, and were resisting the move toward decentralization or community control in urban districts.

These problems were clearly intertwined. (Since most, if not all of the problems remain, they still are intertwined.) Many efforts were being made to attack them. Federal education programs and foundations were providing larger amounts of money than ever before for research, development, innovations, demonstrations, pilot

projects, commissions, task forces, and conferences. Some state departments of education were beginning to play a positive and aggressive role. The anti-poverty programs were stirring grass-roots community efforts toward organizing and developing sophisticated local leaders who were seeking both change and a greater voice in decision-making.

CBTE seemed promising because it was related to all four of the basic problems. It seemed to have high potential precisely because it addressed itself to both political and educational aspects of these problems. It seemed to promise not just research, but research which would lead to rational, sensible changes in teacher preparation, certification, and school practices.

CBTE seemed likely to lead to more diversity and flexibility in teacher preparation and certification, and thus to more diversity, flexibility, and responsiveness to local needs in school programs. It seemed to offer, for some, an acceptable by-pass to the conventional routes of qualifying for jobs in the schools. It seemed to be consistent with concepts of cultural pluralism and new alternative choices for children and their parents among styles and content of schooling. It seemed likely to provide helpful pressure on schools of education to work collaboratively with liberal arts faculties, school people, and communities. It appeared to be a potential building block for reaching goals of more parent and citizen participation in the governance of the schools. It seemed that it could provide the means of defining classroom objectives and teacher performance in concrete and tangible fashion. It offered help to state departments of education and state legislative leaders seeking reasonable handles on the knotty questions of accountability--including teacher evaluation. For some, it promised a way to make teaching and teacher preparation more definable, scientific, solid, and hence, more respectable.

All of this promise and hope should make it clear why several parts of the Office of Education decided to encourage and support the CBTE movement. These decisions were political (in a good and non-partisan sense) as well as educational. Education in any society is profoundly political, relating as it does to fundamental questions of values, power, and allocation of public money.

Future of CBTE

All of the varieties of expectations that were held early on also help to explain some of the current disenchantment, confusion, and controversy of CBTE.

Now, what does the future hold? Merrow's competent summary and assessment of the current status of CBTE stops short of suggesting directions for the future. It is not even clear whether he believes there should be a future for the movement. My response to that omission is to say: Of course, there is a future. What has been invested to date should be capitalized, not written off as a bad investment. My response to Merrow's exclusion of suggestions for the future is to offer my own gratuitous advice. It goes something like this:

1) Continue to invest in research and development related not only to preservice preparation of teachers, but also to inservice staff development, certification, and evaluation.
2) Offer PBTE as one alternative, but not the only valid approach to preservice preparation, certification, inservice training, and teacher evaluation.
3) Encourage diversity within the movement itself by supporting a variety of approaches, styles, and ideologies.
4) Test various CBTE "programs" as tools to local individual school problem--solving efforts in which the teachers, administrators, students, parents, and other community residents work collaboratively to assess needs, determine priorities, prepare objectives, choose alternative programs, and measure results. These very localized efforts can draw on banks of modules and instruments already developed and to the developed in the future.
5) Oppose sweeping state legislation that establishes completing a CBTE "program" as the only route to teacher certification; or legislation that requires all teachers to be measured against a single set of criteria or with a single set of instruments or devices.
6) Include teachers, students, parents, and community representatives in all programs to develop criteria, identify priority competencies, establish requirements for certification, hiring, firing, or promotion.
7) Give the public a major role as watchdog and monitor for

all aspects of the CBTE effort.

8) Develop in as many states as possible broad political alliances to support research, development, testing, and implementation of various CBTE approaches. The alliance should cut across party and liberal/conservative lines in order to consciously counteract the possibility that the movement might become a tax cutting, union busting tool. On the other hand, the alliances must be strong enough to be a counterforce to strong opposition of AFT, NEA and their state and local affiliates to any meaningful experimentation with CBTE or other new approaches to personnel assessment.
9) Give the movement 10 more years before final judgments are made. Don't expect fast results. Expect and allow for false starts, mistakes, controversy, continued opposition, and very slow change.
10) Do not rely on the conventional research model of how new ideas are adopted.

The later point is perhaps the most important lesson to be learned from Merrow's report on CBTE. Educational researchers and funding agencies are still dominated by the view of research and change that says, "If we build a better mousetrap....the process of change will take care of itself." Or, "If we have good enough concepts and methodology and spend enough time and money, the results will be so good that the educational system will change." The linear concept of change and adoption simply doesn't fit a highly political institution such as education. The linear model envisions a tidy progression from research to development, field testing, demonstration, and widespread installation. It assumes ready and willing customers and ignores the political realities of institutional change in education.

If the narrow, inward looking "mousetrap building" attitude that seems to dominate the CBTE movement continues, the results will be hardly worth the effort. My hope is that some of the many able and dedicated people in the movement will now strive to design a broad-base, politically-sensitive strategy and pursue it, even if the chances of success are limited. The central ideas underlying CBTE are just as promising now as they seemed several years ago. Much good work has already been done. CBTE is no miracle cure. It won't and shouldn't be universally accepted and

applied. The changes that result will not always to improvements. Some of the ideas will misused. But, taken overall, CBTE as both a political and an instructional strategy, can contribute to more individualized and diverse programs of teacher preparation. It can provide alternative ways for people to earn credentials for jobs in education. It can also lead to fair and effective ways to make judgments about the performance of personnel in the schools, and to broadened public participation in setting goals for the schools and monitoring the results.

E. A Basis for Rational Action

W. Robert Houston[1/]

Remember the fable of the blind men who were asked to describe an elephant? "A tree trunk," said one. "No, a rope," said the second. "Not at all," said the third, "it's like a huge leaf." So it went as each felt a different part of the elephant. Some of the recent descriptions of competency-based teacher education sound strangely like the limited perceptions of the blind feeling an elephant. As writers have analyzed CBTE, assailed it, defended it, and drawn implications from it, they have invariably revealed more of their own values than of CBTE as a movement.

And so it is with Mr. Merrow. His obvious interest and background in political science colors every phase of this paper. His propensity to perceive only the political ramifications of an issue is both the paper's strength and its weakness.

Basis for Action?

Stressing both educators' naivete and his own view that CBTE is primarily political, Merrow again and again draws political implications from a primarily educational movement.

1/ The author is indebted to colleagues Robert B. Howsam, Howard Jones, and James Cooper for their helpful critiques of an early draft of this paper.

> "Although one would not know it from reading educational journals, the movement to reform teacher training is part of a political struggle between increasingly militant teachers and those who have traditionally exercised control over public education." (page 10)
>
> "The teacher-educators who support CBTE simply do not consider it a labor-management issue or a political question." (page 32)

There is little doubt that many teacher-educators and researchers are politically naive. There is also little doubt that CBTE grew out of a conviction that the preparation of educational personnel needed to be improved. The purpose was primarily educational, not political. The motives basically were educational, not political. The movement itself grows from philosophically sound roots and promises important educational progress.

Any educational or social movement has political implications. It is not inherent only in CBTE. What is drawn out by Merrow as a labor-management issue ascribes to CBTE attributes that are equally applicable to any preparation or education program.

While the perspective of politics may be far too narrow as the major assessment of CBTE, such an analysis is needed. Yet Merrow's frequent flights into rhetoric, polemic, and marginal invective obscure the paper's potential contribution. In 1973, Michael W. Kirst, a political scientist, wrote a monograph, "Issues in Governance for Performance Based Teacher Education."2/ While the monograph did not go deeply into political realities, it did sharpen the appetite for a more complete treatment. The paper by Merrow could have been expected to respond to the need. It could have provided a scholarly analysis which positively influenced the development of American education.

Unfortunately, Merrow's paper falls far short of its potential. It suffers from a lack of scientific and professional rigor and

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2/ Published by AACTE.

attempts to cloud inconsistencies with a mass of footnotes. It displays an unbelievable misunderstanding of the basic assumptions of CBTE and of its educational implications, and misinterprets statistics and quotations. The writer is more disposed to be political than scientific.

The major weakness of the paper lies in the fact that some people may take it seriously. Some may automatically transfer the credibility of the sponsor (NIE) to papers it commissions. Major flaws in the paper reduce considerably its value as a basis for rational action. The result is a great loss for all who seriously search for improvement in the educational system of the nation.

The Houston Conference

So many misinterpretations permeate the paper that it is impossible to cite all of them. I have selected only one section for analysis, the section on pages 32-33 describing the Houston Conference. Perhaps other reviewers will select other sections for analysis which may complement this one.

On September 7, 1973, a group of educators met in New York to plan three conferences during the year to focus on important issues related to CBTE. The first conference, held in Albany, New York, in October, 1973, focused on inservice education. The second examined consortia arrangements and implications (Gainesville, Florida, February, 1974). The third conference explored the research and assessment progress and needs of CBTE, and was held in Houston in March, 1974.

It is not surprising, then, that the major thrusts of the Houston Conference were on "Competency Assessment, Research, and Evaluation", as the conference was entitled. And it is not surprising that the persons who attended the conference were specifically interested in these topics. The pre-conference publicity, the conference design, the speakers, and the task forces were all organized around this topic.

The charge that CBTE supporters' "....reflexive tendency to gaze inward, away from political questions...." may be accurate. But to use the Houston Conference to prove the point stretches the imagination. It is somewhat like criticizing a conference on

herbicides for being too narrow a view of chemistry.

Merrow continues:

> "Those at the conference spoke of CBTE as a way of convincing state legislatures not to cut their appropriations, or of attracting would-be teachers."

Absolutely not true! I have just completed listening to audio-tapes of presentations and discussions at the conference report. This simply was not part of the transcript, and is extremely misleading as a description of the conference or of the intent of participants. The full conference report, soon to be published, adequately supports this position.

Just as misleading is the sentence which follows: "Speakers urging a wider wiew [sic] provoked anger from a few, but most listeners were blase." Wider than what? The implication is, of course, wider than the concerns for cutting appropriations and attracting new students. Merrow deliberately has drawn the picture of a profession concerned only with its own welfare, and not for the "broader" social and political ramifications. This blatant slander must not go unchallenged.

In three fast-paced days of hard work, conferees did explore rational strategies for organizing research on teaching effectiveness. They did participate in sessions on research methodology, on new assessment techniques, and on improved ways to use evaluation strategies to improve educational programs.

Those at the conference would not have recognized it from Merrow's account. Concepts are often misinterpreted. What is posed by a speaker as an issue is interpreted by Merrow as an indictment. Consider, for example, Merrow's statement: "Don Davies, former U. S. Deputy Commissioner of Education, warned his audience of professors, researcher, and state officials about the narrowness of CBTE." (page 32)

Now read what Davies actually said.

> "The competency-based idea has become a movement. It has all the standard characteristics--confusion, proliferation of ideas and activities, differing schools

of thought, lots of energy and talent, strong advocates, and outspoken critics. I am pleased that the idea has 'taken off.' However, there is one central issue about the direction of the movement that should be addressed.

"The question is this: Will competency-based teacher education remain laıgely a research and development effort, focused largely on changing teacher education programs in colleges and universities? or will it move into the larger arena: Teacher competence, the range of things represented by the slogan "accountability," the measurement of success of schools, the involvement of the community in educational decision-making, and the evaluation of professional personnel?

"The first direction is relatively manageable and relatively noncontroversial. The chances of succeeding are relatively good--if this is the direction chosen. But the narrowness of the objective means that the enterprise will be relatively insignificant. The path of highest potential success is also the path to triviality.

"If the second direction is chosen, the competency-based movement will suddenly be center stage and mainstream activity surrounded by extraordinarily complex political and controversial problems and issues. This direction is obviously the significant one, the one in which activities could have profound impact. But it is also a direction in which chances of success (or to be more precise, of achieving institutional changes), are very slim indeed."

Merrow listened to Davies but heard only criticism of CBTE as a narrow approach, while Davies had actually posed a very forceful issue which thoughtful educators must consider as they develop new and potentially more effective ways to improve education.

In several instances, Merrow relates a quotation out of context. Consider these two sentences?

> "The teacher educators who support CBTE simply do not consider it a labor-management issue or a political question. 'CBTE is essentially neutral,' Schmieder said in response to Davies, 'What we do with it determines whether it is mechanistic or humanistic.'" (pages 32-33)

If you are somewhat bewildered, as I was, by Allen Schmieder's apparent confusion of the "labor-management issue or political question", with whether CBTE is "humanistic or mechanistic," don't despair. Schmieder knows that the concept "neutral" implies a referent--neutral toward something. In his use of neutral, his referent was not a political issue but an educational issue. Schmieder's comments, which were taken out of context, had described CBTE as an approach to professional preparation, as a movement. But within that movement, individual programs may use varied contents and methods. Some programs could be competency-based and inherently mechanistic. But Merrow adds another non sequitur to the growing list.3/

The paper is filled with similar accusations taken out of context, misinterpretations, and invalid juxtipositions of quotations. The articulateness of a skillful writer, however, must not fog the paper's lack of scholarly rigor, nor should it form the basis for conclusions of any organization or individual professing a thoughtful approach to problem solving.

Competency-Based Teacher Education

Competency-based teacher education is an inherently logical, powerfully simple concept which promises an approach to improving

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3/ Follow, for example, the logical (?) relationship of three sentences on page 18 which state: (1) most institutions don't think CBTE is significant because (2) only 16 percent felt teaching performance should be evaluated by an outside agency, and (3) the rest favor traditional certification criteria. Only the most curious rationale ties them together.

professional preparation programs. Numerous publications have defined and described it. CBTE training programs are based on the actual roles and needs of practitioners. For teachers, the content of training programs would focus on tasks actually performed and on needs actually experienced. Preparation programs would not be based on irrelevant materials or ideas, nor on the professor's individual interests; they are client oriented. The proof of a program's effectiveness lies in the effectiveness of its graduates as they teach.

These program requirements are made explicit, stated as performances to be demonstrated, and made known in advance to both learner and instructor. Instruction is then keyed to helping the learner to demonstrate competencies, and assessment is linked to these competencies.

CBTE has evolved as a powerful substitute for programs based on courses and credit hours; as a substitute for programs based on participation in experiences rather than on competence; as a substitute to teacher preparation which is basically knowledge based rather than performance based. It seems more important that a teacher be able to teach and to bring about change in boys and girls, than it is for the teacher to only know about teaching. While no one denies the importance of knowledge, simply being able to name the types of questions which can be asked is inadequate. A teacher should be able to use that knowledge and to develop in students an inquiring attitude.

Many preparation programs inherently assume that knowing about teaching is all that is needed. They assume that the prospective teacher should be able to translate knowledge acquired in isolation into working and effective classroom strategies. The gap between knowledge and performance, both conceptually and operationally, is far too great. CBTE somewhat closes this gap by assuming that when prospective teachers demonstrate important actions and a supporting cognitive base, they are more likely to be able to use them as teachers.

Merrow, on pages 19-20, emotionally describes CBTE graduates as "mindless robots" who go through the motions but have no feeling for the art of teaching-classrooms where technician-teachers manipulate children. He conjures up all the negative connotations, all the degrading terms which raise the blood pressure. This

passage reflects the narrow, biased, and limited view the author has of CBTE. Not a single program or CBTE proponent I know of advocates such a position! No one advocates performance without rational decision-making processes. No one defines competence as performing a set of isolated and unrelated tasks. No one ascribes a single set of competencies to all effective teachers.

The Research Question

One major problem identified by Merrow and generally recognized is the lack of a research base. To date, education generally, and professional preparation programs specifically, have relied primarily on lore for determining content and approaches to instruction. Research efforts have provided few findings that aid teacher educators in designing programs. But this lack of validated research applies equally to all preparation programs. All educational approaches assume that their methods and procedures stimulate learning and lead to more effective and efficient instruction.

What is striking in all the reservations, criticisms, and cries for research supporting CBTE is that no one has yet cited a single study against the approach.

Merrow quotes CBTE critics as asking the question, "....if you can't prove that one teaching method is better than others, how can you justify making catalogs of teaching competencies and requiring that teachers acquire them?" The argument is not as unassailable as Merrow concludes, and the movement certainly does not accept it as he supposes.

In fact, this is not even the right question, for it assumes a standard biased base. The two basic questions are: (1) How can teachers be more effectively educated? and (2) by what system can research be employed to improve preparation programs?

CBTE at least provides the framework to study elements of competence and thus to contribute to man's knowledge base. Each competency in the program is explicitly stated as an observable performance, and thus can be treated as an untested hypothesis. The CBTE systemic process permits educators to continue research efforts with the present knowledge base, and to extend it as far

as possible. The process is one of refinement and extension of knowledge. It is a basis for action. Replication under varying conditions, with persons of different personal profiles and in different school contexts, is then possible.

Research oriented agencies and organizations can readily embrace CBTE as it provides a viable approach to solving some critical problems. What is needed, and vitally needed, is a strong, well-financed programmatic thrust supported by research which permits the CBTE concept to be validly tested.

F. California and CBTE
Marjorie Powell, Project Director,
Commission for Teaching Preparation and Licensing

While Dr. Merrow's paper dealt with many of the issues surrounding the competency-based teacher education movement, I am restricting my responses to the statements which he makes about the California program. I have imposed this restriction upon my comments for two reasons: 1) I am more familiar with events in California than elsewhere; and 2), I trust that others will react to his general arguments and his specific statements relative to other states. It is to be regretted that Dr. Merrow did not contact persons in California about CBTE there. They could have provided him with accurate information about the state of the CBTE movement as well as the research being conducted to identify teacher behaviors related to student achievement.

The California legislature has not mandated competency-based teacher education. Legislation in 1970, known as the Ryan Act, established the California Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing. The commission has, in fulfilling its mandate to establish standards for teacher certification, adapted guidelines for the development of teacher education programs. Institutions, following the guidelines and assisted by commission staff members, develop teacher education programs and submit them to the commission for approval. California teacher certification is thus based on the approved program concept.

The guidelines adopted by the commission require that teacher education programs specify the objectives which they set for their students. Program elements must be related to the student objectives

and students must be informed of the objectives. In addition, teacher education institutions must develop and implement a system of studing their graduates in classroom situations. Training programs are modified information obtained from the follow-up studies.

However, the guidelines do not require that programs be developed or described in competency terms. Instructional organization and methods are not prescribed by the commission, but are to be determined by each institution. Neither does the commission prescribe the objectives for each teacher education program.

There are competency-based teacher education programs in California. Some of them are developing new and interesting teaching materials. There are also many teacher education programs which are not competency-based. The Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing seeks to encourage this diversity of approaches to teacher education.

One further comment related to the general discussion of teacher accountability is relevant. The legislation which Dr. Merrow said requires evaluation of certificated teachers, places that function in the hands of each local school district. Guidance in this task is provided by the California State Department of Education. The Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing, which is the state agency responsible for certification of teachers, is not directly involved in the evaluation of certified teachers. That is in accordance with the wishes of the legislature of the state of California.

I do not wish to convey the impression that the Department of Education will not use any and all research related to teacher effectiveness. But I wish merely to point out that the two functions of teacher certification and evaluation of certified teachers are based in separate state agencies.

California, or more specifically the California Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing, is conducting research to identify teacher behaviors which are related to student achievement. The multi-year study is funded by the National Institute of Education, having been transferred from the Office of Economic Opportunity in 1973.

Recognizing that research, to be productive, must be limited by the money available, the commission is focusing on teacher behaviors which are related to student achievement in reading and mathematics in the elementary school, specifically grades 2 and 5. After the first planning year, the commission is devoting two years to intensive study of experienced teachers working in a variety of public school classrooms. During these two years measurement procedures and instruments are being developed and refined, and the research hypotheses are being generated out of the information obtained by observing, interviewing, and testing teachers, and analyzing many aspects of teaching.

These two years of study are being conducted with volunteer teachers who teach students at the grade levels under study. Further selection criteria relate to the location of schools--urban, suburban, and rural--and the demographic characteristics of students. Our sample classrooms include students from low--and middle--income areas, and from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. The commission did not select "teachers whose students score well above the mean on standardized tests" (Merrow, page 22). Information available to date indicates that students in our sample classrooms show a variety of patterns of achievement on standardized tests, as well as on the tests which have been developed for this study. I am particularly concerned that the criteria for selection of teachers be clarified, since the commission has attempted to ensure that a variety of teachers and students be included in the sample. The sample is not limited to those teachers whose students perform well on external criteria represented by standardized achievement tests.

Throughout the two developmental years of the study we are involving classroom teachers in the identification, definition of, and development of measurement procedures for teacher behaviors. This teacher involvement, obtained in a variety of ways, is relevant to this discussion. Practicing teachers assist in the identification of important teacher behaviors. The commission has found many teachers in California who are concerned enough with the need for research to devote time and energy to such work. They have willingly opened their classrooms to us during the 1973-1974 and 1974-1975 school years.

The work of these two years will culminate in a large field study designed to test the research hypotheses developed during

this time. The field study will be conducted with both experienced and beginning teachers. The former to test the research hypotheses, and the latter to determine the degree to which beginning teachers exhibit the identified behaviors. The study will also seek to assess the relationship between teacher behaviors and student achievement. At the conclusion of the large field study in 1976, the commission hopes to have information about the relationship between teacher behaviors and clusters of teacher behaviors, as well as student achievement in reading and mathematics at the elementary school level.

While plans for follow-up research have not been finalized, the commission recognizes the need for, and is considering several methods for conducting, experimental work to further verify the research results. We also hope to determine whether the identified teacher behaviors are trainable, along with one or more training methods. Such experiments will be designed to determine whether teachers who receive training in the behaviors actually implement the behaviors in teaching situations. The final question to be answered is whether students learn more in classrooms where teachers exhibit the behaviors after training.

At that point the commission will have information for teacher education institutions about important teacher behaviors. Institutions will then be provided with information about the relationship between teacher behaviors and student achievement. We do not plan to prescribe all of the teacher behaviors which students in teacher education programs must master. Rather, we plan to encourage institutions to ensure that the teacher behaviors identified through our research are among those familiar to the graduates of teacher education programs. Any researchers will recognize that one study, even a well-funded multi-year study, will not answer all of the questions about teacher behaviors.

To use Dr. Merrow's analogy, the commission will identify for teacher education institutions the clothing appropriate for various types of parties. Formal attire is not suitable for a swimming party, nor is a bathing suit appropriate for an ice skating party. We do not expect to find one set of teaching behaviors which is suitable for all instructional situations. Rather, we expect to identify teaching behaviors which are related to various aspects of student achievement. As individuals change their clothing to fit the occasion, teachers change their behavior to fit the

instructional situation. We will provide teacher education institutions with information about the relationship between teacher behaviors and student learning in a variety of instructional situations. Then the teacher education institutions can teach their students the variety of teacher behaviors, as well as teach them to select the behaviors appropriate for the specific instructional situation.

G. Hazards of Competency-Based Education
Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Competency-based teacher education is the latest in a long history of "innovative" ideas that educators must deal with. What is really at issue is the improvement of teacher education and effectiveness, but the discussion of this important subject has been shaped in terms of something called "competency," or by some, "performance." They both refer to analyzing teaching in terms of measurable skills, performances, or behaviors (the meaning of these terms varies depending on who is using them), and then relating these to student achievement.

The arrival of "competency" as a real movement raises questions not only about the value of the idea itself, but how such ideas are proposed and popularized--often until they reach bandwagon proportions. In one form or another, competency-based teacher education is now being considered by 17 (?) states and endless numbers of teacher education schools. The apparent legitimacy the concept has achieved in teacher education circles and among state legislators and education department bureaucrats, requires that it be taken seriously as a force to contend with regardless of its merits as an idea. Serious discussion requires dealing with three categories of questions:

1) What is the political and economic context or atmosphere that contributed to the emergence of competency-based teacher education? Where is it coming from? Who is pushing it?
2) Given the context, what is its meaning? How is it defined? What is it?
3) Will it improve teacher education? If not, what will? or, how can we find out what will? What is a good professional response to competency-based teacher education?

Context

Unfortunately, new ideas in education usually have more to do with political and economic pressures than with a real understanding of either educational needs or solutions. Competency-based teacher education appears to be no exception. To begin with, student enrollment in the public schools has been declining rapidly. This, together with the fact that more teachers are staying on the job for lack of other places to go, means that teaching positions are rapidly drying up. Some experts have predicted that within a decade there will be two teachers for every teaching job in the United States, with 3 million teachers either unemployed or working in some other field. And, since most boards of education prefer to view this phenomenon as an occasion to announce an "oversupply" of teachers rather than an opportunity to expand and upgrade school staffing, they have welcomed competency-based teacher education and certification as a new rationale for keeping staffing cheap, untenured, and easily expendable.

Reinforcing this brute demographic threat is a growing lack of confidence in the public schools expressed by some of the more vocal segments of the population. The causes for this sentiment fall into roughly four categories:

1) The success of public education. Within the last century the American population has, for the most part, moved from a condition of widespread lack of education to one of mass literacy. As educational gaps among various segments of our population have narrowed, educators have been confronted with a more critical public opinion that no longer respects their authority. Only decades ago the teacher was one of the few highly educated members of our society, but today he is under constant scrutiny of an educated middle class. Teachers have gone, within a very short period of time, from being a part of a very small elite looked up to by the mass of society to the point where they are now regarded as mere equals, or even among the less educated in very many communities. Ironically, this is a result of their own success.

2) New Left attacks on the schools. Within the last 10 years a whole raft of books have been published which can easily

be characterized as anti-public school and anti-teacher. They began with John Holt's How Chidlren Fail, published in 1964, and now include whole libraries by such authors as Edgar Z. Friedenberg, Jonothan Kozol, Herbert Kohl, Miriam Wasserman, Nat Hentoff, etc. Essentially, these books portray their authors as people of superior morality, sensitivity, and concern who believe that what is really wrong with the schools is the people in them. If only the schools could be staffed with people like themselves, they imply, children could be more creative, schools would be freer places, and everyone would benefit from a new lack of bureaucracy, rigidity, and mediocrity.

3) Educational innovations and public relations. The public has watched too many "solutions" to educational problems come and go with little apparent impact on education. The failure of many of these "innovations," most of which are accompanied by hard-sell public relations campaigns, is leading to a public awareness that very little is really known about education. Whatever doubts the public might have had to begin with are constantly reinforced by the yearly arrival of the latest "innovations" and the abandonment of last year's crop.

4) Lack of a research-based definition of effective teaching. The field of teaching has no model of competent professional practice based on a proven body of knowledge of what constitutes effective teaching. A number of studies have come out in the past 10 years which challenge assumptions about school effectiveness and, in turn, teaching effectiveness. The result has been widespread belief that we really know very little about what makes children learn or what defines a good teacher. The professions of law and medicine rest on the assumption that a lawyer or a doctor must know his field in order to be able to engage in the process of practicing good law or medicine. But many will not accept the application of that elementary logic to teaching.

The lack of confidence in the public schools stemming from these causes has had many political consequences. Competency-based teacher education did not simply arrive on the scene because it was a good idea. It fit certain political needs. Behind the notion of competency is the politics of the Nixon Administration.

Richard Nixon undermined the federal role in education by throwing the main burden of responsibility for it back to the states with revenue sharing, or what has been called the "New Federalism." Mismanagement of the economy by his administration, and now President Ford's, has brought us galloping inflation and a resulting tendency among administration advisers to cut social spending even more. The states, which have had to bear the resulting burdens, have also faced finance-related court threats to their funding formulas and distribution mechanisms. The resistance of taxpayers to any increases in their contribution have put the states in a tight fiscal spot. Accountability-type answers like competency-based teacher education (and certification) fill a needed bill. And, if defined vindictively enough, they can give states room to cheapen the cost of teacher education and at the same time provide a recertification mechanism for school boards to dump expensive teachers off the top end of their salary scales.

The administration and the states have cooperated in trying to get the education schools to take hold of the competency idea. Teacher training institutions are threatened for the same reasons as teachers. As public school enrollments go down, prospective teachers turn increasingly to other, more hopeful, fields. The fact that school jobs are simply not available is now well known, and education schools are viewing their declining student populations with justified alarm. What is surprising is that the education schools have, in large measure, been willing to buy the public relations line being handed down by the state governments and the administration. They have failed to notice that teacher organizations are rapidly gaining power at both the state and federal levels, and that teachers are playing an increasingly important electoral role in both state and federal politics. While education school faculties are being cowed into accepting unvalidated notions of "competency," teachers are building political strength to enable them to lead efforts to come up with professional definitions of effective teaching and good teacher education--definitions which may well be developed and implemented before education schools are even aware of what has happened.

In the meantime, popularizers of the competency approach are moving ahead with their campaign. Among them are the Multi-State Consortium on Performance-Based Teacher Education, the National Commission of Performance-Based Education, the National Consortium

of CBE Centers, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and, of course, the Office of Education and the National Institute of Education. Among the vested interests behind these various organizations are state education department staffs; some college professors--particularly those involved in teacher education research--certian teacher training institutions which want to carve out a leadership role for themselves; federal bureaucrats seeking to make some mark in education; and major foundations that are willing to back up all the rest with cash.

Competency-based teacher education seems, then, to be the outgrowth of an interesting combination of economic and political circumstances. All of those factors contributing to the teacher "surplus" combine with the decline of public confidence in the schools to create a situation in which teaching competence becomes a politically useful focus of attention for a national administration and state governments eager to cut school spending. Teacher education schools, blind to the fact that together with (even inside) teachers' organizations they could come up with their own notions of how to improve teacher training, have buckled under. And competency-based teacher education has become a movement to reckon with.

Meaning

Competency-based teacher education can mean almost anything anyone wants it to. Since the idea seems to be fulfilling more of a political and economic need than an educational one, naturally it can be twisted and bent to fit the requirements of any number of states or education schools.

On the one hand, we find situations like that in New York State where colleges must transform their teacher education programs to prove that all their graduates have "demonstrated competence to enable children to learn" but where little indication is offered on what competence means or how it is to be measured. On the other hand, we find highly specific behavioral concepts of competence such as the WILKITS approach at Weber State College in Utah (see John Merrow's paper in this book).

Both approaches are fueled by competency lists such as the notorious Florida Catalog, a collection of highly subjective unvalidated "competencies" which the movement's advocates have thrown together

to help carry on their campaign. The use of such lists goes far to demean the profession. They are based on the assumption that prespective teachers have little ability to think or diagnose on their own and therefore need to have teaching defined for them highly prescriptive, restrictive bits and pieces. These are usually presented in behavioral terms which claim to pass for science.

One of the things most of the various definitions of "competence" have in common is the diea that the course work and study which are part of the teacher college education do not really mean very much--that society is over credentialed and teachers are over-educated. What is really needed, the competency advocates claim, is for teachers to be able to perform a given set of skills whether or not they really know anthing. In other words, teachers should be selected for teaching in much the same way as a boy scout becomes an eagle scout. Instead of going to college the scout must pass a series of performance tests. First he becomes a tenderfoot, and then a second class scout--he gets a series of merit badges and along the way he achieves a number of other ranks. When he gets to be an eagle scout he has not graduated from college but you know he can light a fire with two matches; you know he can walk 14 miles, sprint 100 yards, handle first aid, etc.

This kind of concept lends itself very nicely to cheapening the quality and cost of teacher education. It means that becoming a teacher can be looked upon as achieving a series of performance ranks, all of which a person could do and still not know very much. Teachers could then even be paid differentially, depending upon how many comeptency ranks they had achieved.

Competency advocates counter this argument by claiming that competency also involves understanding psychology, psychology, and all of the other less measurable forms of knowledge that make up a liberal education. In other words, competency is claimed by some to involve everything we already include in teacher education. The argument goes back and forth between these two notions. And what frequently happens is that teacher education schools, trying to meet the requirements of new state laws or mandates, simply reqrite their old programs in the language of competency. Nothing really changes except that teachers must achieve a series of made-up merit badges or competencies that have not been validated by

any serious research.

There is another aspect to the meaning of competency which reveals the true relationship of competency notions to the drive for teacher accountability. Many states and local school districts have welcomed the current focus on accountability because it gives them grounds for criticizing or even firing teachers--particularly the more expensive ones.

Competency-based teacher education projects the notion that teachers should be certified on the basis of successful completion of specified competencies. Since there is no research to tell us whcih competencies are valid, the selection of which competencies are to be required could change from year to year, depending on the political wishes and financial circumstances of the states and local school boards.

With these changes might well come the abolition of teacher tenure and the implementation of recertification plans based on ever-changing notions of competency. The new competency mechanisms may well subject teachers to a whole new series of groundless political pressures that have very little to do with education or good teacher training, but which would help states and school districts save money.

The grist for this hiring-firing mill is the concept's focus on student achievement as the <u>product</u> of competent teaching. No one argues that schools and teachers should not concern themselves with student achievement as a main goal. But a concentration on achievement means a preoccupation with those aspects of teaching and learning which are measurable, and this emphasis could lead to: 1) narrow concerns of cognitive (measurable) learning at the expense of affective growth; and 2) simplistic judgments on teaching competence based solely on student performance.

The reasons for this concern with product should be easy to understand by now. Competency advocates have taken a combination of business theory and behavioral psychology and have come up with a model which answers the needs of states and school districts for a simple accountability design. After all, if you judge teacher success in terms of how well students do (regardless of all the other factors that may influence student achievement) it is easy to find grounds for firing. It also simplified school life somewhat

if concrete student achievement becomes the only desired goal of school experience. What all of this ignores is the complexity of factors that contribute to student growth. It also ignores the need for teaching to be viewed as a process involving abilities of diagnosis, analysis, and understanding, as well as the performance of isolated skills.

In the end, competency-based teacher education is a concept that has little substance. We are being sold something that does not exist--it has no basis in research; its definitions vary from state to state and program to program; and it claims to include everything that teacher education now has. The most it seems to amount to is a series of politically motivated options all of which allow for local or state variations on an accountability thrust directed at teachers.

Among the options touched on here are: 1) substituting the achievement of competencies for the completion of knowledge-based course work and the consequent dismantling of teacher education schools; 2) implementing recertification and the abolition of tenure; 3) rationalizing differentiated staffing; and 4) evaluating and certifying teachers on the basis of student achievement.

It must also be said that the idea could be more meaningful than this if those proposing it would seriously consider how it is being misused. If competency-based teacher education could be redirected from its punitive and measurement emphasis into a sound research effort it might lead to a solid research-based definition of teaching. By helping to make explicit what the profession is, and what it is not--what it can and cannot do--research on competency-based teacher education could make a serious contribution to our knowledge about teaching.

Response

A truly professional response to competency-based teacher education involves fighting against its weaknesses and failings as well as dealing creatively with the need for quality teacher education. Among their criticisms, teachers and other educators should consider the following points:

1) Recognition of the need for research. Research must be

done before any state legislates or mandates teacher education reform along competency-based or any other lines. A variety of programs should be tried experimentally on a limited scale and researched thoroughly. Doing this would first require taking a hard look at teaching and, with the help of experienced teachers, developing some comprehensive ideas on what constitutes good teaching. Next steps would involve isolating and controlling those factors which affect student achievement but are not related to teaching, to find out what it is that teachers do that contributes to student progress. Classroom teachers should be involved at all levels of such research. A good teacher education program would then teach to these findings while carefully monitoring the results. This is the only way to develop a reliable definition of teaching competence. What teachers and the schools need is knowledge which clarifies their role and defines their impact. For states and colleges to undertake wholesale changes before this is discovered makes the competency movement false and hypocritical.

2) Insistance on a college education as a prerequisite for teaching. Though little is known of the effect of various teaching behaviors on students, we do know that a teacher needs to know math to be able to teach it, and must be literate to be able to teach reading. It is also important that prospective teachers have solid grounding in the liberal arts to ensure that they have broad intellectual understanding of how the skills they are teaching relate to other fields. These basics must be guaranteed through the requirement of a college education as well as advocacy of additional study and field experience beyond college.

3) Demand for qualifying examinations. Measures must be implemented which guarantee the present knowledge requirements for entry into the teaching profession. Examinations are given in both medicine and law. It is these that qualify one to be a doctor or a lawyer. We do know enough about teaching to establish standards for minimum knowledge requisites which can

be tested. There is no reason whatever why states cannot require precertification tests that will protect the profession against avant garde, anti-credential notions of competency that may place premiums on motherliness or warmth while the value of basic knowledge is ignored.

4) Opposition to recertification and differentiated staffing. Since there is no research leading to any valid conclusions on teaching competence, any implementation of staffing patterns or evaluation of inservice teachers on the basis of competencies must be opposed. In addition to being a scientifically groundless idea, recertification totally undermines tenure and the rights of teachers to due process procedures.

5) Rejection of the notion that "product" in the form of measurable student achievement should be evidence of teaching competence. Since it is known that the achievement of children is influenced by many factors including the family, socioeconomic conditions, and school conditions and resources, to name only a few, it is simply unfair to judge teachers on student achievement alone. Nor is it good for students to have the sole focus of school fall on their test performance. Because of the variety of factors contributing to school performance, and because of the need for teachers to concern themselves with their students' social and emotional growth, good teaching must be viewed as a complex process with multiple goals rather than the simple creation of the product of student achievement.

But competency by current definition is not the only idea we should be looking at or reacting to. If our real purpose is not to engage in public relations hucksterism, but to improve teaching, then we should also try some approaches which, so far, are not to be found under the competency umbrella.

The American Federation of Teachers, for example, advocates an internship program in which fully paid, fully qualified teachers

begin their teaching careers with a partial teaching load. The rest of their day might then be devoted to supportive seminars and conferences with experienced teachers. During the course of their probationary period the classroom responsibilities of these interns be increased so that by the time they were carrying a full teaching load they would have achieved tenured appointment. Such an idea is patterned after the model of the medical internship which is based on the proven success of combining thorough knowledge with practical experience to create capable professionals.

A teachers' center where teachers could come to share ideas, give advice, and even work in helping to define teaching competence based on experienced professional judgement, would be another teacher training device worth trying and testing. One of the common hindrances to the professional development of teachers is their isolation from their colleagues. Another is the negative, punitive role of most school administrations--a role which leaves most teachers without professional advice and support. A teachers' center that concentrates on inservice training run by teachers themselves might provide teachers with a self-development mechanism that would encourage on-the-job creativity.

Teachers' centers might also be viewed as a meeting ground for beleaguered education schools, which simply must move into the area of inservice education if they are to survive; and the organized profession, which is anxious to find meaningful inservice programs.

Conclusion and Some Thoughts on Next Steps

These, then, are the issues and the possibilities that the organized profession, the National Institute of Education, the Office of Education, the research community, state departments of education, state legislatures, and teacher education schools should seriously consider in reacting to the competency idea and in pursuing the development of teacher education. Given the widely acknowledged lack of research validation for any given set of teaching competencies, legislating or mandating competency-based programs is clearly indefensible, even professionally corrupt. Responsible educators cannot admit on the one hand that there is no research basis for their various competency approaches, and on the other hand welcome wide-scale implementation of new, unsubstantiated programs. A much more defensible and principled stance for them

to take would be to advocate small-scale implementation of a few programs accompanied by carefully monitored research examination before attempts are made to even popularize such programs, much less demand them.

The present economic and political atmosphere must be carefully considered in selecting sites for such research efforts. Teachers are faced with the double-barreled gun of job shortages and an accountability campaign directed primarily at them. The idea of being researched is not something they are likely to welcome, and with good reason.

If, however, researchers choose sites where a strong teachers' organization exists, and make appropriate contact with the leadership of that organization, teachers will be much more inclined to cooperate and less likely to view such efforts as simply a device for attacking them. Researchers must understand that teachers' fears on this score are well justified since all too many so-called research efforts have masked attempts to undermine their job security.

There are also important issues at stake related to research priorities and the way such efforts are organized. The continued myopia of most education schools regarding the real crisis they face over declining student enrollment is indeed surprising. It is simple foolhardy for them to think that they can swell their entering student bodies using public relations gimmicks like competency-based teacher education. Nor is it a responsible act for them to try, when graduating such classes, simply to increases the number of job seekers who have little chance of finding positions. Immediate prospects for teacher training and its accompanying research lies in the area of inservice education. Unless all groups involved realize this, they will only continue to undercut their own futures. The National Commission of Performance Based Education is sponsoring the only research effort thus far which seems to recognize the importance of the point just made.

As to organization of these efforts, for the first time there is the real possibility that the existence of a national educational research agency, the National Institute of Education, can change the useless, fragmented, repetitive pattern which has always characterized educational research. To do this properly the NIE

will have to guard against aping the ivory tower style of the major education schools. Its research efforts must not simply reflect one philosophy or approach. It must guard against bringing in department chairman-type stars who simply gather like-minded followers around them to conduct a homogeneous brand of personalized research.

The NIE must shape its goals from the demands of the public and the recognized interest groups in education. And it owes the public an attempt to reach those goals, using a representative sample of the legitimate research technique at its disposal. NIE cannot be the private arena of the behaviorists, of the geneticists, or of the structuralists, but must provide a mechanism through which all of them can make a contribution to educational advancement.

There is an overriding purpose to all of this in which teachers, researchers, and education professors have a common interest. The educational professions need definition. We all need to know what it is that teachers and schools do that is truly effective. We all have thoughts about what these things are. Most teachers certainly have some strong ideas about them. But until they are defined more carefully, a lot of inconclusive, but widely touted research--Equality of Educational Opportunity, Inequality and, most recently the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement studies--will continue to argue that teachers and schools are of minimal importance.

Until we have this definition, education will continue to be subject to the swings of the economic and political pendulum. Programs will come and go depending more on how much money is available than on their educational merits. The definition of what constitutes good teaching will change with every shift in the political wind--within the last five years alone we have seen a popularity swing from progressive, open concepts to behavioral ones.

The public will continue to be suspicious about thwat goes on in schools and hesitate to give us funds to try even the things we do know will work. If educators--whether teachers, researchers, or professors--take themselves and the work of schooling children at all seriously, they simply must be able to tell the public what the experience of school means to children. Competency-based

teacher education, as presently defined and advocated, will not help.

H. Reaction to "Politics of Competence"
Bill Smith, Teachers Corps

John Merrow's interpretation of the evaluation of CBTE is a commendable curiosity in educational literature. He has adroitly accomplished a tricky task: producing 30 odd pages on a complex educational topic which are both concise and thorough without sacrificing an entertaining readability level. For that accomplishment alone he must receive my plaudits. Beyond this, however, Merrow's paper also yields a highly useful examination of the problems, the progress, the strengths, and the weaknesses of CBTE. It is hoped that the reader will find this reply as cogent, if not perhaps as comprehensive or enjoyable, as Merrow's "Politics of Competence" which caused the reaction.

There has been wide ranging discussion about CBTE in educational circles for several years. As Merrow repeatedly points out, everyone is for it in theory. In theory, competency-based teacher education provides a way for prospective teachers to build on their individual skills and interests. It suggests that teacher preparation is both exciting and rewarding--the entry rite into a professional life energized by intellectual curiosity and growth.

In 1970 a group of teachers met with USOE officials in Harper's Ferry, West Virginia. The major theme of the conference was improvement of teacher education. Many representatives of NEA and AFT were present. In the report from that meeting is the following statement:

> "Performance based teacher certification is needed simply because it makes sense....The adaption of performance based approaches to teacher certifica-

> tion would enhance the credibility of the certification process and strengthen teaching as a profession."1/

(Elsewhere in the report the teachers called for a greater voice on state certification boards.) Witness the inconsistency between this statement and the stand taken by the National Teacher Task Force on Educational Reform comprised of many NEA and AFT representatives four years later:

> "Performance based certification suggests that prospective teachers shall not be licensed until they demonstrate minimum standards of competency but no research exists to validate the criteria to be used....We recommend that until there is adequate and substantial research in the teaching and learning to provide a data base for responsible decision making, there be no attempt to institute performance based certification."2/

This group of teachers insisted that competency-based teacher education be severed from competency-based teacher certification. The former they defined as a legitimate response to an educational need, the latter as an attempt to solve a political problem.

What, then, occasioned this reversal in teacher position on CBTE? The early and inadequate implementation of competency based approaches and programs to satisfy the yawning appetite of accountability was one factor contributing to the adjusted stance of these teachers.

1/ Task Force '72 and the Classroom Teacher Look at Educational Reform. Final Report for Teacher Improvement Leadership Training Institute (LTI) and United States Office of Education Sponsored Conference of Teacher Leaders. Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, 1970, page 28.

2/ Inside-Out: The Final Report and Recommendations of the Teachers National Field Task Force on the Improvement and Reform of American Education, USOE publication No. 74-12002, 1974, page 38.

The future of performance education is in the hands of the political decision-makers. Despite the best and worst efforts of students, teachers, school administrators, college professors, and/or administrators, the performance movement is no longer within their control. And movement is the right word.

There are actually two distinct difficulties for the competency-based movement evident in this change of attitude phenomenon. One problems is that the competency-based movement has been viewed by some of the overly anxious members of the profession as "the pill" to be taken to cure any accountability ailments. The other negative factor which appears to be operative is that the concept of CBTE is in the abstract a glossy, appealing, dream-like prosperity. Idealistically everyone is for it, but realistically no one knows exactly how to get there.

Like all innovations for improvement, competency-based teacher education must experience some birth pangs; and, a lot of these have been witnessed in the past four years. The fact that so many have cast CBTE in the role of heroic deliverance--providing the "Deus ex machina" solution to the tribulations of teacher training--has only served to compound the problem and delay the day when competency-based programs, validated by sound research, will be consistently instrumental in improving the quality of the majority of this nation's teacher education programs.

Competency-based education's major problem has been its victimization by abortively early commercialism. It has been "advertised" (i.e., all the catalogs, publications, etc. to which Merrow refers) as though it was a product ready for retailing. The truth is that competency-based programs rightfully belong to R&D rather than the department of advertisement and merchandizing. This early selling of a yet uncompleted product has raised levels of expectation unreasonably high and contributed to a disillusion and discontent factor which may harden into a force that will resist even the completed product. Illegitimately early claims on the performance of CBTE efforts can only be detrimental.

Certainly the concept of training teachers with an emphasis on demonstrated abilities rather than credit hour accumulation is one well worth pursuing. The Federal government has supported early ventures into CBTE development, and a number of efforts continue today. It would be unrealistic to expect that seed money provided

several years in a row would produce results which are immediately applicable across the board. And it would not be responsible to desert a program of such promise because in its first few years some have misinterpreted its intent and others have prematurely applied its theory before a sound data base was accumulated. But the natural limitation of Federal financial support does demand that funds be spent in a fashion which will maximize impact. Given the absence of a sufficient data restricting the usefulness of CBTE, it appears logical to assume that Federal CBTE support be used for programs which propose to enlarge the research bank which can be eventually employed to validate competencies used in training programs.

I would suggest:

1) Research and development to build a sound knowledge base for the identification and assessment of competencies.
2) Capacity building at the state and local elementary and secondary, postsecondary, and occupational licensing levels.
3) Evaluation of the consequences and implications of the competency-based approach.
4) Technical assistance and support for the transformation of credentialling to competency-based criteria, thus removing structural barriers.

By taking this approach it seems possible to avoid Merrow's rather pessimistic conclusion "that judgments about the competence of teachers will be made in the same old ways, though probably more often and perhaps more harshly."

I. The Underlying Issues of CBTE
Sheldon Stoff, Department of Education
Adelphi University

Dr. Merrow's report touches on many of the issues of competency-based education. He realized that "the issues are larger than CBTE's 'mechanistic' or 'humanistic nature'". Merrow decides that the real factor is "a labor-management issue." Had he probed further he would have recognized an additional issue which even transcends that vital and important concern.

What has moved the opposition of many university people is definitely not the labor-management issue. At its heart, the direct issue that concerns our university is that of an all powerful state imposing a view of learning and assessment on teacher education institutions with the thought of later imposing this learning style on all public school children.

The opposition to CBTE agrees that our schools are in trouble, but it disagrees with both the diagnosis and the prescription. Quack medicines can sometimes lead to much worse results than the illness they mean to cure. In the eyes of these critics, the languishing and in some cases degenerate condition of education today is the result of complex social problems. Certainly we can hold teachers responsible for failures that are legitimately theirs, but to put the whole burden on them is to avoid facing basic causes.

Research has not indicated that CBTE is the hoped for panacea. But neither is it an innocuous fad. Its failure will not be a quiet, unnoticed, flop. Critics believe they speak for the common sense and practical experience of the great majority of actual teachers when they insist vehemently that CBTE's concepts of accountability are sure to end in disaster.

Why a disaster? If children are not to become machines, only what is distinctively human should be dominant in their education. In the content they study, in the evaluation of their teachers, in relations among the people who direct the programs there must be primary concern for the enhancement of life, and life is far more than "systems" or assessment procedures.

At a time when our nation so badly needs depth of understanding, the filling of moral and spiritual vacuums, and a renewed love of learning, CBTE would concentrate on infinitely subdivided scraps of information and thousands of petty skills taught through "modules" and "packets." Aspects of the child that defy packaging will assert themselves in a rebellion that will make the present moral apathy of students, the drugs and sex orientation, the anarchial outbreaks, seem pale by comparison.

Materials that take responsibility away from teachers and put it in the hands of kit manufacturers weaken teaching. They cannot improve present teachers in any fundamental way nor can they attract

new teachers. Creative minds do not want to be "classroom managers." What we should be evaluating in the performance of teachers is the degree of enthusiasm they can engender, the imagination they can use to develop ideas or skills, and the strength of character they can bring into a classroom.

Yes, we need closer checks on these qualities, but the evaluation, if it is not to be as mechanized and ineffective as the modules, must also be a distinctively human process. Is it really true that human judgment is in the end less objective than standardized tests? Certainly we must insist upon evaluation of each step of the way, but let us not supplant human judgment with mechanized gimmicks.

Pre-professional participation in the actual schools has been increased and should, as Mr. Shanker urges, include internships. But the surest way to defeat these ends is to set up complicated and expensive bureaucratic structures. The fallacy of supposedly foolproof written agreements among all parties involved in the direction of schools is seen as soon as we recognize that such agreements are based not upon trust but upon mutual suspicion. They lead to a jockeying within a power structure, subverting the harmony that they allegedly serve. A systems approach (CBTE) increases neither responsibility nor genuine accountability; it diffuses responsibility and industrializes the whole of education.

It does seem to many that the greater the degree of state intervention the less professional, creative, and responsible teachers will be. If it is true that education is a matter of deepest cultural concern, then it must also be true that state dictates of learning style and assessment methods are an infringement on the most sacred and private of citizen responsibilities.

To compromise on this basic issue of academic freedom is to compromise the very meaning of democracy and education in a free society. That is the final question and the definitive issue. Can educators withdraw from their responsibility to support a pluralism of educational endeavors, some wise, some foolish, in the fond hope that this accountability mandate will end all hardship and confusion in education? It is on the basis of such thoughts that democracy wanes and dictatorship thrives. I do not simply oppose CBTE, but instead favor truly free educational approaches so that meaningful choice among alternatives is possible. If we do not support the principle of freedom what will we stand for?

PART III

JOHN MERROW RESPONDS TO CRITICS AND REACTORS

John Merrow Responds

If one value of criticism is that it sheds light on the perspectives from which the critics write, then the reader of the preceding responses to my analysis of CBTE has a good sense of the territory. I hope my own few paragraphs will help keep the CBTE argument, if not the CBTE movement, alive and well.

Don Davies has provided a useful criticism. He explains the Office of Education's organized support of CBTE, and he makes policy suggestions for the future. The latter are pretty much what one would expect from a sensible, liberal, citizens' advocate/university professor: a broader view of teacher training, more diversity, no more sweeping legislation, increased citizen participation, and greater awareness of the non-linear nature of change. Translating such suggestions into policy and practice is the job of those in the education bureaucracy--like William Smith, the capable, voluble Director of the Teacher Corps.

Smith's words carry weight, but I find his suggestions disappointing. They all seem to mean "spend more money on CBTE", and I would hope that someone would say, "Let's not spend any money on this aspect of CBTE; let's invest in basic research instead."

Bernard McKenna of the National Education Association has also extended the debate into useful directions: 1) other research into teacher performance; and 2) suggestions for the future. McKenna says that my paper all but ignores non-CBTE research into teacher performance. It would be ironic if I have fallen into the same trap that I find CBTE enmeshed in: that is, diverting attention from other, potentially useful research into the effects of teaching. I meant to imply--and I guess I should have said it outright--that 1) CBTE's own inward-looking, gimmicky nature detracts from more serious research; and 2) there ain't enough good education research.

Like Davies, McKenna takes me to task for not suggesting a course of action for the future. My only defense is that the National Institute of Education, which hired me to do the study in the first place, asked me not to, because it wanted people like Davies, Smith, McKenna, Albert Shanker, and others to handle that part. Nonetheless, I have tacked on an extra paragraph to these few pages.

Albert Shanker (who is now, of course, President of AFT) states the opposition's view of CBTE, and his piece ought to be read as a companion to Robert Houston's. Shanker delivers what might be called a "them or us" notice to the teacher training institutions. And if Shanker is right, those institutions are in deep trouble, because by not declaring for the teacher union movement, the teacher training institutions are declaring against it. Nonetheless, purse strings are in the hands of the old guard and are likely to remain there for the foreseeable future.

A couple of points in Robert Houston's paper need answering. We were both at the University of Houston conference, I as an observer, Houston as sponsor and participant. I reported what I heard: numerous conversations about tight-fisted legislatures and flight-minded students. My notes bear out the observation about the blasé response of the audience to Don Davies and Harvey Scribner, both of whom posed tough challenges to CBTE. The audience response amounted to a loud "Ho Hum," except when the streaker, Barak Rosenshine, interrupted Scribner's conclusion.

Houston would put me into corners I never intended to darken. I never said that CBTE graduates would be "mindless robots." I only said that some critics fear that outcome. I imagine CBTE, as it exists today, produces graduates who are no more or less mindless than the graduates of other teacher preparation programs. Houston argues for a "strong, well-financed programmatic thrust supported by research." I would prefer to put the emphasis on research into the acts and processes of teaching and learning in the classroom. Obviously, we differ as to which is the cart and which the horse.

I am sorry that Houston does not speak to my "political" analysis of CBTE: that CBTE is being misused by some to 1) justify expensive teacher training complexes; and 2) combat teacher militancy and rising costs.

I conclude from one student's response that Weber State ought to take a long hard look at WILKIT 12, which apparently relies on Ginott's Between Parent and Child to help develop self-concept. Let me quote from that book:

"Both boys and girls need help in their progress toward

> their different biological destinies. Parents can help by not demanding the same standard of conduct from both sexes. Boys should be allowed to be more boisterous both because of their greater energy and because society requires them to be more assertive....They should not be expected to be as neat and compliant as girls, or to have ladylike manners. The dictum that "boys will be boys" is a valid one, and it demands leeway for the discharge of energy in strenuous masculine activities."

and from the same source:

> "Since the majority of women are destined to be wives and mothers, their public education and private expectations should enable them to derive deep satisfaction from these roles. Of course, individual women may decide to choose different roles: they may want to be mechanics or sailors or astronauts, or to run a business, or to run for Congress. While there should be sufficient flexibility for a person of either sex to find fulfillment in any occupational or political role, life is easier when most men and women are not engaged in mutual competition and rivalry." (New York: MacMillan and Company, 1965, pp. 171f.f.)

I think a careful reading of Marjorie Powell's paper indicates that I have accurately reported on the situation in California: to wit, after the passage of the Ryan Act in 1970, the Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing began requiring teacher training institutions to specify objectives and relate program elements to those objectives and by 1976, the commission "anticipates having information about the relationship between teacher behaviors, and student achievement in reading and mathematics at the elementary school level." I was not objecting to the research itself, but to the "fiendishly clever" (I would call it foolish) notion that colleges should be required to specify competencies, etc., before the knowledge base exists.

Had I been asked to talk about CBTE's future, I would have fudged a bit and written about teacher education, not CBTE. They ain't

the same thing. I would have argued for free and required inservice courses in the arts and sciences for public school teachers. Let the school districts pay the tuition and the salary increments. I would have argued for some form of mandatory movement (either within or between schools) by the teachers, to ensure that no one taught the same courses year after year. I would have argued for the use of standardized tests to allow schools (not teachers) to judge their own performance over the years (between-school comparisons are already commonplace, even if they aren't usually based on test scores). And I would have argued that in the future CBTE and its sponsors and cheerleaders should be challenged rigorously. Public education suffers when a small group stakes out a claim to "the public interest" (competence, in this case) and then tries to obscure the shakiness of the claim in a cloud of jargon.

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